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Filing date: **09/25/2020**

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

Proceeding	91237315
Party	Plaintiff American Marriage Ministries
Correspondence Address	NANCY V STEPHENS FOSTER PEPPER PLLC 1111 3RD AVENUE, SUITE 3000 SEATTLE, WA 98101 UNITED STATES Primary Email: nancy.stephens@foster.com 206-447-4400
Submission	Other Motions/Papers
Filer's Name	Nancy V. Stephens
Filer's email	nancy.stephens@foster.com
Signature	/Nancy V. Stephens/
Date	09/25/2020
Attachments	Final Errata to Notice of Reliance 9252020.pdf(21010 bytes) 89 to 94.pdf(5073192 bytes) 95 to 111.pdf(5141523 bytes) 112 to 127.pdf(2184318 bytes) 499 to 543.pdf(6041121 bytes) 544 to 588.pdf(3516296 bytes) 1008 to 1068.pdf(5222229 bytes)

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD**

AMERICAN MARRIAGE MINISTRIES,)	Opposition No. 91237315
)	
Opposer,)	Marks: GET ORDAINED
)	Application No. 87430729
v.)	
)	
UNIVERSAL LIFE CHURCH)	
MONASTERY STOREHOUSE, INC.)	
)	Filed: October 18, 2017
Applicant.)	
_____)	

OPPOSER’S NOTICE OF ERRATA ON ITS NOTICE OF RELIANCE

Opposer, American Marriage Ministries, files this Errata to correct an error in its Notice of Reliance that was filed on September 9, 2020.

1. Due to a clerical error, Bates Nos. AMM NOR 00089-00127 was not attached to the TTAB filing. However, they were served on opposing counsel. Attached to this filing are Bates Nos. AMM NOR 00089-00127.

2. Due to a clerical error, Bates Nos. AMM NOR 00128-00359 were not used. This range of documents does not exist.

3. Due to a clerical error, Bates Nos. 00454-00543 were used twice, although they represent different documents. All documents so numbered were served on opposing counsel. Only duplicate AMM NOR 00454-498 was filed. To correct the discrepancy in numbering and align documents filed with documents served on opposing counsel, AMM renumbered the duplicated documents Bates Nos. AMM NOR 01008-01097 and filed them with this Errata.

4. Due to a clerical error, Bates Nos. 00499-00588 were not filed with the TTAB. However, they were served. Attached to this filing are Bates Nos. 00499-00588.

5. Due to a clerical error, incorrect documents were filed under seal. Bates No. AMM NOR 00687-00792 should not have been included in the filing. The correct documents are being filed under seal as AMM NOR 01069 - 01170. The documents are correctly listed on the Notice of Reliance as Exhibit I, "Opposer's Motion of Partial Summary Judgment with Exhibits filed February 28, 2019."

Dated: September 25, 2020.

/Nancy V. Stephens/
Nancy V. Stephens WSBA No. 31510
Benjamin Hodges, WSBA No. 49301
Kelly A. Mennemeier, WSBA No. 51838
Foster Garvey PC
1111 Third Avenue, Suite 3000
Seattle, WA 98101-3299
206-447-4400

Attorneys for Opposer

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on September 25, 2020, I served the foregoing OPPOSER'S NOTICE OF ERRATA ON ITS NOTICE OF RELIANCE on the Applicant by emailing to Applicant as follows:

Michael P. Matesky, II
Matesky Law PLLC
trademarks@mateskylaw.com
mike@mateskylaw.com

/Ruth Ann Van Steen/
Ruth Ann Van Steen

How to get married in Columbus Ohio? Get married here in Downtown Columbus for only \$20. Walk in's welcome.
If your looking for a Wedding Officiant or Wedding Minister, look no further. we're the number one and largest Officiant service in Columbus for a reason. We have multiple Officiants who have the experience to make your wedding day one to remember. Our fees are the lowest in the county for a Wedding Officiant or Wedding Minister. Why let the courthouse be your wedding chapel, We're only 3 blocks away. If your looking for places to get married free in Columbus, we also offer a free service each Tuesday from 12 noon until 3 pm.
Required deposits and fees are non-refundable.

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How to Become a Legally Ordained Minister Today!

If you want to know how to become a legally ordained minister, the American Fellowship Church website is definitely a resource for you.

Welcome to The American Fellowship Church

First, you can [become ordained](#). Men and women who are not able or don't wish to [become ordained](#) through traditional paths such as seminary study, will find our path to ordination a real alternative and an easy one to follow.

Become Ordained



0:00 / 1:38

YouTube

While it is impossible to determine each person's reason for wanting to become ordained, we have chosen 3 major reasons visitors come to our website. It is our hope that of these 3 categories below, one may quickly take you to what you are seeking:

1. [I am getting married...](#)

I am visiting the site because I am getting married and am looking for a way

I am visiting the site because I am getting married and am looking for a way for a friend or relative to perform my wedding ceremony / officiate.

[2. My Friend or Relative is getting married...](#)

I found your site because I am interested in becoming ordained to perform / officiate a ceremony for a friend or relative.

[3. I want to become a minister...](#)

I feel called on to strengthen my spiritual relationship, or become a minister and I would like to know more about being an ordained minister. If this is the case read on...

[Click here to Renew](#)

Since our founding in 1975, we have helped thousands of men and women of all faith groups, ethnic, gender, educational, professional and occupational backgrounds to become legally ordained ministers.

Men and women in every state in the United States, in all the Canadian provinces, and in many other countries throughout the world, have [become ordained](#) in our church.

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Furthermore, in addition to ordination the American Fellowship Church can provide you with spirituality information and materials which you can use to enhance your [well-being](#) and assist your desire to serve God to the best of your ability, once you are ordained as a minister. People sometimes refer to the process as [online ordination](#) but that is not a correct description of our process to becoming a **licensed minister**.

Ordination and your religious freedom

People want to become ordained in our church for almost as many different reasons as there are people. Fortunately, the constitutional separation of church and state in the United States allows for a degree of freedom for spiritual growth and religious expression.

Whether people feel the call to serve God as minister, preacher, chaplain, pastor, priest, deacon, brother or sister, or even rabbi, becoming ordained online can be the way for them to achieve their goal.

As well as being independent, non-denominational and international, the

As well as being independent, non-denominational and international, the American Fellowship Church believes in allowing individual responsibility for spiritual growth and development.

We Believe

- That each person's reasons for wishing to become ordained are between that person and God.
- That if you become ordained, you may find yourself led to spiritual growth and development.
- That God has different messages for different people in different situations.
- There are many paths leading to the same point and we are all open to many avenues for growth

We ordain both men and women as ministers

The American Fellowship Church welcomes and ordains women into the ministry.

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Testimonial from one of our Ministers...

I was skeptical at first about contacting the A.F.C., being wary of getting an affiliation I wouldn't like, but after reading the material that was sent to me, I must tell you how pleased I am to find one organized church that shares my own views about religion and the personal relationships we each have with God.... I am glad that I can be a part of the A.F.C. so that I can help others live better lives, and hopefully give constructive assistance.

Rev. D. E., New York



[1 Year Ordination](#) [5 Year Ordination](#) [Lifetime Ordination](#)

What does this mean for you?

The American Fellowship Church will never try to force you to accept any beliefs other than your own. However, we do suggest that spiritual growth and development take place more steadily if we eat good food, obtain

proper exercise, pray/meditate and find satisfying work.

In addition to ordination we provide [training courses](#) and [documents](#) which are useful to ministers and churches.

How the church began...

The American Fellowship Church was founded by Theodore H. Swenson.

Rev. Swenson is a former Dean of Students at the University of
He had wanted to become an ordained minister since he was a youth but he was not able to find the right connection to make that happen.

In short, he resigned his position with the University and, in 1975, he organized the non-denominational American Fellowship Church. In the course of setting up the Church, he learned how to help others who wanted to [become legally ordained](#).

About Ordination and ministry

To begin with, it is not necessary to study to become ordained with our Church. Instead, we rely on your good will and the experience you have already gained during your lifetime.

But here's the thing... distance learning allows you to develop your counseling and pastoral skills, while carrying on with your home and family life, so, if you want more preparation, we urge you to take any or all of the home-study correspondence courses we offer. But, it is entirely up to you.

Please understand that after you become ordained, you must actually assume the role of minister and carry out your ministry to make it become a meaningful reality, unless you are becoming ordained simply to perform the wedding of a friend or relative, then your ministry can stop there, if you wish. Please see the note below re Canada and other countries outside of USA*.

Besides our [courses](#), we offer various other materials and certificates to help you - you can even become a [Doctor of Divinity](#). But what you do is YOUR choice.

And what's more...after you become ordained, you may:

Conduct Church Services such as:

- Marriages
- Baptisms
- Funerals

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Finally, you may also serve in any other appropriate way, including open door outreach ministries and regular church services.

If you plan to perform marriages for friends or others, we urge you to look at "[Minister Licensing Laws](#)." This publication contains important information you need before you perform marriages in the United States.

You may or may not be able to perform marriages in other countries. For example, our ministers may not perform marriages in Canada where very few churches are allowed to do that.

[Donate](#)



**** ATTENTION **** If you want to perform a wedding for a friend or relative, please visit our minister licensing guide locate your state (or the state in which you intend to perform the wedding) then simply follow the instructions.

If you are here to obtain a minister license on behalf of a friend or relative:

1 – Be sure that the person you are asking that we ordain has read, & has agreed to our [Certification and Ethics](#)

2 – Be sure to explain to us in the "comments" section upon checkout: All details:

- a. Who's name and address is to be printed on the license
- b. to what address the order is to be mailed,

if you do not specify where to send the materials, they will be sent to the name and address in the "Ship to". Additionally, you need to enter the person who is to be ordained on the ID card page.

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WARNING: Do NOT become ordained with us in an attempt to gain tax benefits or to violate the laws of the jurisdiction where you reside. We are organized for RELIGIOUS purposes and not to assist with lawbreaking. We expect our ministers to behave ethically and to obey the laws of their jurisdictions. If you violate the law or if you fail to maintain an appropriate ethical and moral standard for an ordained minister, your

ethical and moral standard for an ordained minister, your ordination and license will terminate immediately and automatically without further notice.

Countries where we have ordained ministers

Antigua, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Ecuador, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guyana, Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Italy, Ivory Coast Republic, Jamaica, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Guinea, New Zealand, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Rep. of Seychelles, Russia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, Thailand, UK, USA, United Arab Emirates, Virgin Islands, W. Africa, Wales, Zimbabwe

USA states & territories where we have ordained ministers

[Alabama](#), [Alaska](#), [Arizona](#), [Arkansas](#), [California](#), [Colorado](#), [Connecticut](#), [Delaware](#), [Florida](#), [Georgia](#), [Hawaii](#), [Idaho](#), [Illinois](#), [Indiana](#), [Iowa](#), [Kansas](#), [Kentucky](#), [Louisiana](#), [Maine](#), [Maryland](#), [Massachusetts](#), [Michigan](#), [Minnesota](#), [Mississippi](#), [Missouri](#), [Montana](#), [Nebraska](#), [Nevada](#), [New Hampshire](#), [New Jersey](#), [New Mexico](#), [New York](#), [North Carolina](#), [North Dakota](#), [Ohio](#), [Oklahoma](#), [Oregon](#), [Pennsylvania](#), [Puerto Rico](#), [Rhode Island](#), [South Carolina](#), [South Dakota](#), [Tennessee](#), [Texas](#), [Utah](#), [Vermont](#), [Virginia](#), [Washington](#), [West Virginia](#), [Virgin Islands](#), [Wisconsin](#), [Wyoming](#)

Canadian Provinces where we have ordained ministers

Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba, British Columbia, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Newfoundland and Labrador

We are delighted to have been instrumental in assisting each individual to **become an ordained minister.**

[Home](#) > How to Become a Legally Ordained Minister Today!

All prices are in USD Copyright 1975 – 2014 American Fellowship Church. [Sitemap](#) | Remember to :-)



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As mentioned in Brides Magazine May/June 2008

American Association Of Wedding Officiants

The American Association of Wedding Officiants is an association of professional wedding ministers, celebrants, officials, and Justices of the Peace who have joined together to promote professionalism in the ever growing profession of performing weddings. The purpose is to share information and ideas to make each member better equipped to perform a wedding ceremony and to allow brides and grooms to select a wedding officiant with better knowledge and ability. Each member is certified to be legally registered to perform a wedding ceremony in their jurisdiction.

HIRE AN OFFICIANT

Looking for a wedding officiant? Click this link below for information on how to find and select a wedding officiant in your location. Or e-mail the Moderator for assistance at iernschwahn@yahoo.com

officiant in your location. Or e-mail the Moderator for assistance at jerryschwehm@yahoo.com

Wedding Officiant Referral Page

Membership is open to registered wedding officiants and must be applied for at the associations Group

Link: **AAWO Yahoo Group**

Members of the association can also be contacted directly by going to their web pages listed on the **membership list by state** at the **Links Section of the Yahoo Group**.

For further information on the American Association of Wedding Officiants contact the Moderator or Co-Moderator at the below links:

Dr. Jerry K. Schwehm Moderator

E-Mail: jerryschwehm@yahoo.com

Chaplain Fig Street Ministries

New Orleans, LA.

Pastor Marie April Gismondi

E-Mail: revs@optonline.net

Church of Ancient Ways

New York City

Important Questions to Ask Your Wedding Officiant Before You Book The Wedding

1. Are you registered to perform weddings in my location?
2. How long have you officiated weddings?
3. About how many weddings you do per year?
4. What training have you had?
5. Will you go to my location to do a ceremony?
6. What type of ceremonies will you perform?
7. What are your rules as to photography ?
8. Is pre-marital counseling required?
9. Do you have ceremony samples?
10. What are the fees charged?

Ask for a reference too.

Chaplain JK Schwehm
65115 Highway 41
Pearl River, La. 70452

Tel: **(504) 617-6359 Answer Service**

Best way to contact is e-mail or leave message at answer service and I will return your call ASAP. My cell number has changed if you call it it may say it is not active.

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Revised: .

To: American Marriage Ministries (stepn@foster.com)
Subject: U.S. TRADEMARK APPLICATION NO. 86321469 - AMERICAN MARRIAGE MINISTRIES - 208585-1
Sent: 2/9/2015 8:09:44 AM
Sent As: ECOM116@USPTO.GOV
Attachments:

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE (USPTO)

**IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING YOUR
U.S. TRADEMARK APPLICATION**

USPTO OFFICE ACTION (OFFICIAL LETTER) HAS ISSUED
ON **2/9/2015** FOR U.S. APPLICATION SERIAL NO. 86321469

Please follow the instructions below:

(1) TO READ THE LETTER: Click on this [link](#) or go to <http://tsdr.uspto.gov>, enter the U.S. application serial number, and click on "Documents."

The Office action may not be immediately viewable, to allow for necessary system updates of the application, but will be available within 24 hours of this e-mail notification.

(2) TIMELY RESPONSE IS REQUIRED: Please carefully review the Office action to determine (1) how to respond, and (2) the applicable response time period. Your response deadline will be calculated from **2/9/2015** (*or sooner if specified in the Office action*). For information regarding response time periods, see <http://www.uspto.gov/trademarks/process/status/responsetime.jsp>.

Do NOT hit "Reply" to this e-mail notification, or otherwise e-mail your response because the USPTO does NOT accept e-mails as responses to Office actions. Instead, the USPTO recommends that you respond online using the Trademark Electronic Application System (TEAS) response form located at http://www.uspto.gov/trademarks/teas/response_forms.jsp.

(3) QUESTIONS: For questions about the contents of the Office action itself, please contact the assigned trademark examining attorney. For *technical* assistance in accessing or viewing the Office action in the Trademark Status and Document Retrieval (TSDR) system, please e-mail TSDR@uspto.gov.

WARNING

Failure to file the required response by the applicable response deadline will result in the ABANDONMENT of your application. For more information regarding abandonment, see <http://www.uspto.gov/trademarks/basics/abandon.jsp>.

PRIVATE COMPANY SOLICITATIONS REGARDING YOUR APPLICATION: Private companies **not** associated with the USPTO are using information provided in trademark applications to mail or e-mail trademark-related solicitations. These companies often use names that closely resemble the USPTO and their solicitations may look like an official government document. Many solicitations require that you pay "fees."

Please carefully review all correspondence you receive regarding this application to make sure that you are responding to an official document from the USPTO rather than a private company solicitation. All official USPTO correspondence will be mailed only from the "United States Patent and Trademark Office" in Alexandria, VA; or sent by e-mail from the domain "@uspto.gov." For more information on how to handle private company solicitations, see http://www.uspto.gov/trademarks/solicitation_warnings.jsp.

Trademark Snap Shot Amendment & Mail Processing Stylesheet
(Table presents the data on Amendment & Mail Processing Complete)

OVERVIEW

SERIAL NUMBER	86321469	FILING DATE	06/26/2014
REG NUMBER	0000000	REG DATE	N/A
REGISTER	PRINCIPAL	MARK TYPE	SERVICE MARK
INTL REG #	N/A	INTL REG DATE	N/A
TM ATTORNEY	BAIRD, MICHAEL	L.O. ASSIGNED	116

PUB INFORMATION

RUN DATE	01/22/2015		
PUB DATE	N/A		
STATUS	661-RESPONSE AFTER NON-FINAL-ACTION-ENTERED		
STATUS DATE	01/21/2015		
LITERAL MARK ELEMENT	AMERICAN MARRIAGE MINISTRIES		
DATE ABANDONED	N/A	DATE CANCELLED	N/A
SECTION 2F	YES	SECTION 2F IN PART	NO
SECTION 8	NO	SECTION 8 IN PART	NO
SECTION 15	NO	REPUB 12C	N/A
RENEWAL FILED	NO	RENEWAL DATE	N/A
DATE AMEND REG	N/A		

FILING BASIS

FILED BASIS		CURRENT BASIS		AMENDED BASIS	
1 (a)	YES	1 (a)	YES	1 (a)	NO
1 (b)	NO	1 (b)	NO	1 (b)	NO
44D	NO	44D	NO	44D	NO
44E	NO	44E	NO	44E	NO
66A	NO	66A	NO		
NO BASIS	NO	NO BASIS	NO		

MARK DATA

STANDARD CHARACTER MARK	YES
LITERAL MARK ELEMENT	AMERICAN MARRIAGE MINISTRIES
MARK DRAWING CODE	4-STANDARD CHARACTER MARK
COLOR DRAWING FLAG	NO

CURRENT OWNER INFORMATION

PARTY TYPE	10-ORIGINAL APPLICANT
------------	-----------------------

NAME	American Marriage Ministries
ADDRESS	Suite 280 3800 Aurora Ave. North Seattle, WA 98103
ENTITY	99-non-profit corporation
CITIZENSHIP	Washington
GOODS AND SERVICES	
INTERNATIONAL CLASS	045
DESCRIPTION TEXT	Ecclesiastical services, namely, ordaining ministers to perform marriage ceremonies through a non-denominational, interfaith church

GOODS AND SERVICES CLASSIFICATION							
INTERNATIONAL CLASS	045	FIRST USE DATE	07/04/2009	FIRST USE IN COMMERCE DATE	07/04/2009	CLASS STATUS	6-ACTIVE

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION/STATEMENTS	
CHANGE IN REGISTRATION	NO

PROSECUTION HISTORY				
DATE	ENT CD	ENT TYPE	DESCRIPTION	ENT NUM
01/21/2015	TEME	I	TEAS/EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE ENTERED	012
01/20/2015	CRFA	I	CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED IN LAW OFFICE	011
01/20/2015	TROA	I	TEAS RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION RECEIVED	010
07/17/2014	GNRN	O	NOTIFICATION OF NON-FINAL ACTION E-MAILED	009
07/17/2014	GNRT	F	NON-FINAL ACTION E-MAILED	008
07/17/2014	CNRT	R	NON-FINAL ACTION WRITTEN	007
07/07/2014	DOCK	D	ASSIGNED TO EXAMINER	006
07/03/2014	PMSG	O	PETITION TO DIRECTOR - MAKE SPECIAL - GRANTED	005
07/03/2014	APET	A	ASSIGNED TO PETITION STAFF	004
07/02/2014	NWOS	I	NEW APPLICATION OFFICE SUPPLIED DATA ENTERED IN TRAM	003
07/01/2014	TPMS	I	TEAS PETITION TO DIRECTOR-MAKE SPECIAL-RECEIVED	002
06/30/2014	NWAP	I	NEW APPLICATION ENTERED IN TRAM	001

CURRENT CORRESPONDENCE INFORMATION	
ATTORNEY	Nancy V. Stephens
CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS	NANCY V. STEPHENS FOSTER PEPPER PLLC 1111 3RD AVE STE 3400 SEATTLE, WA 98101-3264
DOMESTIC REPRESENTATIVE	NONE

AMERICAN MARRIAGE MINISTRIES

Response to Office Action

The table below presents the data as entered.

Input Field	Entered
SERIAL NUMBER	86321469
LAW OFFICE ASSIGNED	LAW OFFICE 116
MARK SECTION	
MARK	http://tsdr.uspto.gov/img/86321469/large
LITERAL ELEMENT	AMERICAN MARRIAGE MINISTRIES
STANDARD CHARACTERS	YES
USPTO-GENERATED IMAGE	YES
MARK STATEMENT	The mark consists of standard characters, without claim to any particular font style, size or color.
EVIDENCE SECTION	
DESCRIPTION OF EVIDENCE FILE	The Examining Attorney refused the mark finding the word "AMERICAN" primarily geographically descriptive and finding MARRIAGE MINISTRIES merely descriptive of the services. The mark AMERICAN MARRIAGE MINISTRIES has become distinctive of the Applicant's services through exclusive and continuous use. The Applicant amends the Application to seek registration on the Principal Register based on a claim of acquired distinctiveness under Section 2(f). The mark has become distinctive of the services through applicant's substantially exclusive and continuous use in commerce for at least five years immediately before the date of this statement.
ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS SECTION	
SECTION 2(f) Claim of Acquired Distinctiveness, based on Five or More Years' Use	The mark has become distinctive of the goods/services through the applicant's substantially exclusive and continuous use in commerce that the U.S. Congress may lawfully regulate for at least the five years immediately before the date of this statement.
SIGNATURE SECTION	
DECLARATION SIGNATURE	/Nancy V. Stephens/
SIGNATORY'S NAME	NANCY V. STEPHENS
SIGNATORY'S POSITION	Attorney
SIGNATORY'S PHONE NUMBER	206-447-8925
DATE SIGNED	01/20/2015
RESPONSE SIGNATURE	/Nancy V. Stephens/
SIGNATORY'S NAME	NANCY V. STEPHENS
SIGNATORY'S POSITION	Attorney
SIGNATORY'S PHONE NUMBER	2064478925
DATE SIGNED	01/20/2015
AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY	YES

FILING INFORMATION SECTION	
SUBMIT DATE	Tue Jan 20 16:31:47 EST 2015
TEAS STAMP	USPTO/ROA-XX.XXX.XXX.XXX- 20150120163147528843-8632 1469-530a79332a39cab96ebf df6673de7b85723abd9e41909 2f8e9cd935fd66e3d595-N/A- N/A-20150120162659093957

PTO Form 1957 (Rev 9/2005)
OMB No. 0651-0050 (Exp. 07/31/2017)

Response to Office Action

To the Commissioner for Trademarks:

Application serial no. **86321469** AMERICAN MARRIAGE MINISTRIES(Standard Characters, see <http://tsdr.uspto.gov/img/86321469/large>) has been amended as follows:

EVIDENCE

Evidence in the nature of The Examining Attorney refused the mark finding the word "AMERICAN" primarily geographically descriptive and finding MARRIAGE MINISTRIES merely descriptive of the services. The mark AMERICAN MARRIAGE MINISTRIES has become distinctive of the Applicant's services through exclusive and continuous use. The Applicant amends the Application to seek registration on the Principal Register based on a claim of acquired distinctiveness under Section 2(f). The mark has become distinctive of the services through applicant's substantially exclusive and continuous use in commerce for at least five years immediately before the date of this statement. has been attached.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

SECTION 2(f) Claim of Acquired Distinctiveness, based on Five or More Years' Use

The mark has become distinctive of the goods/services through the applicant's substantially exclusive and continuous use in commerce that the U.S. Congress may lawfully regulate for at least the five years immediately before the date of this statement.

SIGNATURE(S)

Declaration Signature

DECLARATION: The signatory being warned that willful false statements and the like are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under 18 U.S.C. Section 1001, and that such willful false statements and the like may jeopardize the validity of the application or submission or any registration resulting therefrom, declares that, if the applicant submitted the application or amendment to allege use (AAU) unsigned, all statements in the application or AAU and this submission based on the signatory's own knowledge are true, and all statements in the application or AAU and this submission made on information and belief are believed to be true.

STATEMENTS FOR UNSIGNED SECTION 1(a) APPLICATION/AAU: If the applicant filed an unsigned application under 15 U.S.C. Section 1051(a) or AAU under 15 U.S.C. Section 1051(c), the signatory additionally believes that: the applicant is the owner of the trademark/service mark sought to be registered; the applicant or the applicant's related company or licensee is using the mark in commerce and has been using the mark in commerce as of the filing date of the application or AAU on or in connection with the goods/services in the application or AAU, and such use by the applicant's related company or licensee inures to the benefit of the applicant; the original specimen(s), if applicable, shows the mark in use in commerce as of the filing date of the application or AAU on or in connection with the goods/services in the application or AAU; and to the best of the signatory's knowledge and belief, no other person has the right to use the mark in commerce, either in the identical form or in such near resemblance as to be likely, when used on or in connection with the goods/services of such other person, to cause confusion or mistake, or to deceive.

STATEMENTS FOR UNSIGNED SECTION 1(b)/SECTION 44 APPLICATION: If the applicant filed an unsigned application under 15 U.S.C. Section 1051(b), Section 1126(d), and/or Section 1126(e), the signatory additionally believes that: the applicant is entitled to use the mark in commerce; the applicant has a bona fide intention and has had a bona fide intention as of the application filing date to use or use through the applicant's related company or licensee the mark in commerce on or in connection with the goods/services in the application; and to the best of the signatory's knowledge and belief, no other person has the right to use the mark in commerce, either in the identical form or in such near

resemblance as to be likely, when used on or in connection with the goods/services of such other person, to cause confusion or mistake, or to deceive.

Signature: /Nancy V. Stephens/ Date: 01/20/2015
Signatory's Name: NANCY V. STEPHENS
Signatory's Position: Attorney
Signatory's Phone Number: 206-447-8925

Response Signature

Signature: /Nancy V. Stephens/ Date: 01/20/2015
Signatory's Name: NANCY V. STEPHENS
Signatory's Position: Attorney

Signatory's Phone Number: 2064478925

The signatory has confirmed that he/she is an attorney who is a member in good standing of the bar of the highest court of a U.S. state, which includes the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and other federal territories and possessions; and he/she is currently the applicant's attorney or an associate thereof; and to the best of his/her knowledge, if prior to his/her appointment another U.S. attorney or a Canadian attorney/agent not currently associated with his/her company/firm previously represented the applicant in this matter: (1) the applicant has filed or is concurrently filing a signed revocation of or substitute power of attorney with the USPTO; (2) the USPTO has granted the request of the prior representative to withdraw; (3) the applicant has filed a power of attorney appointing him/her in this matter; or (4) the applicant's appointed U.S. attorney or Canadian attorney/agent has filed a power of attorney appointing him/her as an associate attorney in this matter.

Serial Number: 86321469
Internet Transmission Date: Tue Jan 20 16:31:47 EST 2015
TEAS Stamp: USPTO/ROA-XX.XXX.XXX.XXX-201501201631475
28843-86321469-530a79332a39cab96ebfd667
3de7b85723abd9e419092f8e9cd935fd66e3d595
-N/A-N/A-20150120162659093957

To: American Marriage Ministries (stepn@foster.com)
Subject: U.S. TRADEMARK APPLICATION NO. 86321469 - AMERICAN MARRIAGE MINISTRIES - 208585-1
Sent: 7/17/2014 1:11:32 PM
Sent As: ECOM116@USPTO.GOV
Attachments: [Attachment - 1](#)
[Attachment - 2](#)
[Attachment - 3](#)
[Attachment - 4](#)

**UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE (USPTO)
OFFICE ACTION (OFFICIAL LETTER) ABOUT APPLICANT'S TRADEMARK APPLICATION**

U.S. APPLICATION SERIAL NO. 86321469

MARK: AMERICAN MARRIAGE MINISTRIES

86321469

CORRESPONDENT ADDRESS:

NANCY V. STEPHENS
FOSTER PEPPER PLLC
1111 3RD AVE STE 3400
SEATTLE, WA 98101-3264

CLICK HERE TO RESPOND TO THIS LETTER:
http://www.uspto.gov/trademarks/teas/response_forms.jsp

APPLICANT: American Marriage Ministries

CORRESPONDENT'S REFERENCE/DOCKET NO :
208585-1

CORRESPONDENT E-MAIL ADDRESS:
stepn@foster.com

OFFICE ACTION

STRICT DEADLINE TO RESPOND TO THIS LETTER

TO AVOID ABANDONMENT OF APPLICANT'S TRADEMARK APPLICATION, THE USPTO MUST RECEIVE APPLICANT'S COMPLETE RESPONSE TO THIS LETTER **WITHIN 6 MONTHS** OF THE ISSUE/MAILING DATE BELOW.

ISSUE/MAILING DATE: **7/17/2014**

The referenced application has been reviewed by the assigned trademark examining attorney. Applicant must respond timely and completely to the issue(s) below. 15 U.S.C. §1062(b); 37 C.F.R. §§2.62(a), 2.65(a); TMEP §§711, 718.03.

Summary of Issues:

- Search of Office records
- Refusal under Section 2(e)(2)
- Advisory regarding disclaimer of generic wording

Search of Office Records

The trademark examining attorney has searched the Office's database of registered and pending marks and has found no conflicting marks that would bar registration under Trademark Act Section 2(d). TMEP §704.02; see 15 U.S.C. §1052(d).

However, applicant must respond to the following refusal:

AMM NOR 00106

Proposed Mark is Primarily Merely Geographically Descriptive

Registration is refused because the applied-for mark is primarily geographically descriptive of the origin of applicant's services. Trademark Act Section 2(e)(2), 15 U.S.C. §1052(e)(2); *see* TMEP §§1210, 1210.01(a).

A mark is primarily geographically descriptive when the following is demonstrated:

- (1) The primary significance of the mark is a generally known geographic place or location;
- (2) The services for which applicant seeks registration originate in the geographic place identified in the mark; and
- (3) Purchasers would be likely to make a services-place association; that is, purchasers would be likely to believe that the services originate in the geographic place identified in the mark.

TMEP §1210.01(a); *see In re Societe Generale des Eaux Minerales de Vittel S.A.*, 824 F.2d 957, 959, 3 USPQ2d 1450, 1452 (Fed. Cir. 1987); *In re Joint-Stock Co. "Baik,"* 80 USPQ2d 1305, 1309 (TTAB 2006).

Applicant has proposed the mark AMERICAN MARRIAGE MINISTRIES for services consisting of “*Ecclesiastical services, namely, ordaining ministers to perform marriage ceremonies through a non-denominational, interfaith church.*”

AMERICAN is defined as “of . . . the U.S.” *see attached definition*. Applicant is located in Seattle, Washington, which is within the United States. As the services originate from the place named in the mark, a services-place association may be presumed. TMEP §1210.04; *see, e.g., In re Cal. Pizza Kitchen Inc.*, 10 USPQ2d 1704, 1706 (TTAB 1988) (holding CALIFORNIA PIZZA KITCHEN primarily geographically descriptive of restaurant services rendered in California).

The wording MARRIAGE refers to the act of wedding, and MINISTRIES is defined as the act of serving or performing as clergy. *See attached definitions*. As applicant is engaged in the activity of ordaining ministers for the sole purpose of performing weddings, the term MARRIAGE MINISTRIES merely describes the basic nature of applicant's services.

The addition of generic or highly descriptive wording to a geographic word or term does not diminish that geographic word or term's primary geographic significance. TMEP §1210.02(c)(ii); *see, e.g., In re Cheezwhse.com, Inc.*, 85 USPQ2d 1917, 1920 (TTAB 2008) (holding NORMANDIE CAMEMBERT primarily geographically descriptive of cheese); *In re Carolina Apparel*, 48 USPQ2d 1542, 1543 (TTAB 1998) (holding CAROLINA APPAREL primarily geographically descriptive of retail clothing store services).

As the proposed mark is primarily merely geographically descriptive in its entirety, registration must be refused.

Options for Response

Although registration on the Principal Register has been refused, applicant may respond to the refusal by submitting evidence and arguments in support of registration and/or by amending the application to seek registration under Trademark Act Section 2(f) based on a claim of acquired distinctiveness of the mark. *See* 15 U.S.C. §1052(f). Amending the application to Section 2(f) does not preclude applicant from submitting arguments against the refusal(s).

An applicant can amend the application to seek registration on the Principal Register based on a claim of acquired distinctiveness under Section 2(f) by (1) submitting actual evidence that the mark has acquired distinctiveness of the services, (2) claiming ownership of a prior U.S. registration for the same mark and the same or related services, or (3) providing the following verified statement: “**The mark has become distinctive of the goods and/or services through applicant's substantially exclusive and continuous use in commerce for at least five years immediately before the date of this statement.**” *See* 15 U.S.C. §1052(f); 37 C.F.R. §2.41; TMEP §§1212 *et seq.*

However, an allegation of five years' use alone will be insufficient evidence of distinctiveness in this case because applicant's mark is highly descriptive of the services. *See, e.g., In re Kalmbach Publ'g Co.*, 14 USPQ2d 1490 (TTAB 1989); TMEP §1212.05(a).

In the alternative, applicant may amend the application to seek registration on the Supplemental Register. *See* 15 U.S.C. §1091; 37 C.F.R. §§2.47, 2.75(a); TMEP §§801.02(b), 816. Amending to the Supplemental Register does not preclude applicant from submitting evidence and arguments against the refusal(s). TMEP §816.04.

Disclaimer Advisory

Applicant is advised that, if the application is amended to seek registration on the Principal Register under Trademark Act Section 2(f) or on the Supplemental Register, applicant will be required to disclaim “MINISTRIES” because such wording appears to be generic in the context of applicant's services. *See* 15 U.S.C. §1056(a); *In re Wella Corp.*, 565 F.2d 143, 144, 196 USPQ 7, 8 (C.C.P.A. 1977); *In re Creative Goldsmiths*

of Wash., Inc., 229 USPQ 766, 768 (TTAB 1986); TMEP §1213.03(b).

The following is the standardized format for a disclaimer:

No claim is made to the exclusive right to use “MINISTRIES” apart from the mark as shown.

TMEP §1213.08(a)(i).

How to Respond

If applicant has questions regarding this Office action, please telephone or e-mail the assigned trademark examining attorney. All relevant e-mail communications will be placed in the official application record; however, an e-mail communication will not be accepted as a response to this Office action and will not extend the deadline for filing a proper response. *See* 37 C.F.R. §2.191; TMEP §§304.01-.02, 709.04-.05. Further, although the trademark examining attorney may provide additional explanation pertaining to the refusal(s) and/or requirement(s) in this Office action, the trademark examining attorney may not provide legal advice or statements about applicant's rights. *See* TMEP §§705.02, 709.06.

TEAS PLUS APPLICANTS – TO MAINTAIN REDUCED FEE, ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS MUST BE MET, INCLUDING SUBMITTING DOCUMENTS ONLINE: Applicants who filed their application online using the lower-fee TEAS Plus application form must (1) continue to submit certain documents online using TEAS, including responses to Office actions (see TMEP §819.02(b) for a complete list of these documents); (2) accept correspondence from the USPTO via e-mail throughout the examination process; and (3) maintain a valid e-mail address. *See* 37 C.F.R. §2.23(a)(1), (a)(2); TMEP §§819, 819.02(a). TEAS Plus applicants who do not meet these three requirements must submit an additional fee of \$50 per international class of goods and/or services. 37 C.F.R. §2.6(a)(1)(iv); TMEP §819.04. However, in certain situations, authorizing an examiner's amendment by telephone will not incur this additional fee.

/Michael W. Baird/
Managing Attorney
Law Office 116
571-272-9487
Michael.Baird@uspto.gov (informal queries only)

TO RESPOND TO THIS LETTER: Go to http://www.uspto.gov/trademarks/teas/response_forms.jsp. Please wait 48-72 hours from the issue/mailling date before using the Trademark Electronic Application System (TEAS), to allow for necessary system updates of the application. For *technical* assistance with online forms, e-mail TEAS@uspto.gov. For questions about the Office action itself, please contact the assigned trademark examining attorney. **E-mail communications will not be accepted as responses to Office actions; therefore, do not respond to this Office action by e-mail.**

All informal e-mail communications relevant to this application will be placed in the official application record.

WHO MUST SIGN THE RESPONSE: It must be personally signed by an individual applicant or someone with legal authority to bind an applicant (i.e., a corporate officer, a general partner, all joint applicants). If an applicant is represented by an attorney, the attorney must sign the response.

PERIODICALLY CHECK THE STATUS OF THE APPLICATION: To ensure that applicant does not miss crucial deadlines or official notices, check the status of the application every three to four months using the Trademark Status and Document Retrieval (TSDR) system at <http://tsdr.uspto.gov/>. Please keep a copy of the TSDR status screen. If the status shows no change for more than six months, contact the Trademark Assistance Center by e-mail at TrademarkAssistanceCenter@uspto.gov or call 1-800-786-9199. For more information on checking status, see <http://www.uspto.gov/trademarks/process/status/>.

TO UPDATE CORRESPONDENCE/E-MAIL ADDRESS: Use the TEAS form at <http://www.uspto.gov/trademarks/teas/correspondence.jsp>.

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American English Dictionary

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American (əˈmɛrɪkən )

► Definitions

- adjective
- of or in America
 - (US) of, in, or characteristic of the U.S. or its people or culture ⇒ *the American language*
- noun
- a person born or living in North or South America (: *specif.*)
 - (*obsolete*) an American Indian
 - a citizen of the U.S.
 - (US) the English language as spoken and written in the U.S.

Word Frequency ●●●●●

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English > English for Learners > French > German > Spanish > Italian >

American English Dictionary

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Your search found: [marriage](#) / [Usage examples](#) / [Trends](#)

marriage ('mæɪrɪdʒ )

► Definitions

- noun**
1. the state of being married; relation between spouses; married life; wedlock; matrimony
 2. the act of marrying; wedding
 3. the rite or form used in marrying
 4. any close or intimate union
 5. the king and queen of a suit, esp. as a meld in pinochle

► Word Origin

Word Frequency ●●●●○

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You are here > [Home](#) > [American English Dictionary](#) > Definition of "ordain"

English > English for Learners > French > German > Spanish > Italian >

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ordain (ɔr'dɛɪn )

► Definitions

transitive verb

1. (*obsolete*) to put in order; arrange; prepare
2.
 - a. to decree; order; establish; enact
 - b. to predetermine; predestine
3. to invest with the functions or office of a minister, priest, or rabbi

intransitive verb

4. to command; decree

Derived Forms

— ad —

Word Frequency ●●●●●

Spread the Word

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What do you think?

To: American Marriage Ministries (stepn@foster.com)
Subject: U.S. TRADEMARK APPLICATION NO. 86321469 - AMERICAN MARRIAGE MINISTRIES - 208585-1
Sent: 7/17/2014 1:11:33 PM
Sent As: ECOM116@USPTO.GOV
Attachments:

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE (USPTO)

**IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING YOUR
U.S. TRADEMARK APPLICATION**

USPTO OFFICE ACTION (OFFICIAL LETTER) HAS ISSUED
ON **7/17/2014** FOR U.S. APPLICATION SERIAL NO. 86321469

Please follow the instructions below:

(1) TO READ THE LETTER: Click on this [link](#) or go to <http://tsdr.uspto.gov>, enter the U.S. application serial number, and click on "Documents."

The Office action may not be immediately viewable, to allow for necessary system updates of the application, but will be available within 24 hours of this e-mail notification.

(2) TIMELY RESPONSE IS REQUIRED: Please carefully review the Office action to determine (1) how to respond, and (2) the applicable response time period. Your response deadline will be calculated from **7/17/2014** (*or sooner if specified in the Office action*). For information regarding response time periods, see <http://www.uspto.gov/trademarks/process/status/responsetime.jsp>.

Do NOT hit "Reply" to this e-mail notification, or otherwise e-mail your response because the USPTO does NOT accept e-mails as responses to Office actions. Instead, the USPTO recommends that you respond online using the Trademark Electronic Application System (TEAS) response form located at http://www.uspto.gov/trademarks/teas/response_forms.jsp.

(3) QUESTIONS: For questions about the contents of the Office action itself, please contact the assigned trademark examining attorney. For *technical* assistance in accessing or viewing the Office action in the Trademark Status and Document Retrieval (TSDR) system, please e-mail TSDR@uspto.gov.

WARNING

Failure to file the required response by the applicable response deadline will result in the ABANDONMENT of your application. For more information regarding abandonment, see <http://www.uspto.gov/trademarks/basics/abandon.jsp>.

PRIVATE COMPANY SOLICITATIONS REGARDING YOUR APPLICATION: Private companies **not** associated with the USPTO are using information provided in trademark applications to mail or e-mail trademark-related solicitations. These companies often use names that closely resemble the USPTO and their solicitations may look like an official government document. Many solicitations require that you pay "fees."

Please carefully review all correspondence you receive regarding this application to make sure that you are responding to an official document from the USPTO rather than a private company solicitation. All official USPTO correspondence will be mailed only from the "United States Patent and Trademark Office" in Alexandria, VA; or sent by e-mail from the domain "@uspto.gov." For more information on how to handle private company solicitations, see http://www.uspto.gov/trademarks/solicitation_warnings.jsp.

*** User:mbaird ***

#	Total Marks	Dead Marks	Live Viewed Docs	Live Viewed Images	Status/ Search Duration	Search
01	70796	N/A	0	0	0:01	*amer*[bi,ti]
02	12545	N/A	0	0	0:03	*mar\${"jg"}*[bi,ti]
03	3737	N/A	0	0	0:01	*min{v}st*[bi,ti]
04	76	0	76	69	0:01	1 and (2 3) and live[lid]
05	7	0	7	7	0:01	2 and 3 and live[lid]
06	12573	N/A	0	0	0:02	*american*[bi,ti] and live[lid]
07	659	0	659	581	0:01	6 and (a b 200 045)[ic]

Session started 7/17/2014 6:53:03 AM

Session finished 7/17/2014 7:10:03 AM

Total search duration 0 minutes 10 seconds

Session duration 17 minutes 0 seconds

Default NEAR limit=1ADJ limit=1

Sent to TIGRS as Serial Number: 86321469

Petition to Make Special

The table below presents the data as entered.

Input Field	Entered
SERIAL NUMBER	86321469
REGISTRATION NUMBER	
FORM TEXT	
<p>Dear Commissioner: This petition is being submitted pursuant to Trademark Rules 2.63 and 2.146, 37 C.F.R. §§ 2.63 and 2.146, to seek the following action by the Director: <i>Make the attached trademark application "special" for expedited processing.</i> The Director has the authority to take such action pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §2. The required fee of \$100.00 is enclosed herewith.</p> <p>The Relevant Facts American Marriage Ministries. ("Petitioner") is filing this Petition to Make Special seeking expedited handling of its application Serial No. 86321469 because it presently has an imminent need for expedited prosecution of its application because of the existence of actual infringement. Petitioner believes this need constitutes special circumstances that justify the advancement of its application out of the normal order of examination. TMEP §1710.01 specifically lists this basis as a common reason for granting petitions to make "special."</p> <p>Conclusion For the forgoing reasons, Applicant respectfully requests that the Director exercise his supervisory power and make the attached application "special" and expedite its examination.</p> <p>Dated: July 1, 2014</p> <p>/Nancy V. Stephens/ Nancy V. Stephens, WSBA No. 31510 Attorney for Petitioner 1111 Third Avenue, Suite 3400 Seattle, Washington 98101-3299 206-447-4400</p>	
PAYMENT SECTION	
NUMBER OF CLASSES	1
FEE PER CLASS	100
TOTAL FEES DUE	100
SIGNATURE SECTION	
DECLARATION SIGNATURE	/Nancy V. Stephens/
SIGNATORY'S NAME	Nancy V. Stephens
SIGNATORY'S POSITION	Attorney of Record
SIGNATORY'S PHONE NUMBER	206.447.8925
DATE SIGNED	07/01/2014
SUBMISSION SIGNATURE	/Nancy V. Stephens/
SIGNATORY'S NAME	Nancy V. Stephens
SIGNATORY'S POSITION	Attorney of Record
SIGNATORY'S PHONE NUMBER	206.447.8925
DATE SIGNED	07/01/2014
AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY	YES

FILING INFORMATION SECTION**TEAS STAMP**

USPTO/PMS-XX.XXX.XXX.XXX-
20140701175646708142-8632
1469-20140701174933360256
-DA-4314-2014070117493336
0256

Global Format; No Form Number (Rev 8/2009)
OMB No. 0651-0061 (Exp. 07/31/2018)

Petition to Make Special**To the Commissioner for Trademarks:**

The following is submitted for application serial number. **86321469** :

FORM INFORMATION**Dear Commissioner:**

This petition is being submitted pursuant to Trademark Rules 2.63 and 2.146, 37 C.F.R. §§ 2.63 and 2.146, to seek the following action by the Director:

Make the attached trademark application "special" for expedited processing.

The Director has the authority to take such action pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §2. The required fee of \$100.00 is enclosed herewith.

The Relevant Facts

American Marriage Ministries. ("Petitioner") is filing this Petition to Make Special seeking expedited handling of its application Serial No. **86321469** because it presently has an imminent need for expedited prosecution of its application because of the existence of actual infringement. Petitioner believes this need constitutes special circumstances that justify the advancement of its application out of the normal order of examination. TMEP §1710.01 specifically lists this basis as a common reason for granting petitions to make "special."

Conclusion

For the forgoing reasons, Applicant respectfully requests that the Director exercise his supervisory power and make the attached application "special" and expedite its examination.

Dated: July 1, 2014

/Nancy V. Stephens/
Nancy V. Stephens, WSBA No. 31510
Attorney for Petitioner
1111 Third Avenue, Suite 3400
Seattle, Washington 98101-3299
206-447-4400

FEE(S)

Fee(s) in the amount of \$100 is being submitted.

SIGNATURE(S)**Declaration Signature**

The signatory being warned that willful false statements and the like are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under 18 U.S.C. Section 1001, and that such willful false statements and the like may jeopardize the validity of the application or submission or any registration resulting therefrom, declares that the facts set forth in this submission are true; and that all statements made of his/her own knowledge are true and all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true.

Signature: /Nancy V. Stephens/ Date: 07/01/2014

Signatory's Name: Nancy V. Stephens

Signatory's Position: Attorney of Record

Signatory's Phone Number: 206.447.8925

Submission Signature

Signature: /Nancy V. Stephens/ Date: 07/01/2014

Signatory's Name: Nancy V. Stephens

AMM NOR 00117

Signatory's Position: Attorney of Record
Signatory's Phone Number: 206.447.8925

The signatory has confirmed that he/she is an attorney who is a member in good standing of the bar of the highest court of a U.S. state, which includes the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and other federal territories and possessions; and he/she is currently the petitioner's attorney or an associate thereof; and to the best of his/her knowledge, if prior to his/her appointment another U.S. attorney or a Canadian attorney/agent not currently associated with his/her company/firm previously represented the petitioner in this matter: (1) the petitioner has filed or is concurrently filing a signed revocation of or substitute power of attorney with the USPTO; (2) the USPTO has granted the request of the prior representative to withdraw; (3) the petitioner has filed a power of attorney appointing him/her in this matter; or (4) the petitioner's appointed U.S. attorney or Canadian attorney/agent has filed a power of attorney appointing him/her as an associate attorney in this matter.

RAM Sale Number: 4314
RAM Accounting Date: 07/02/2014

Serial Number: 86321469
Internet Transmission Date:
TEAS Stamp: USPTO/PMS-XX.XXX.XXX.XXX-201407011756467
08142-86321469-20140701174933360256-DA-4
314-20140701174933360256

AMERICAN MARRIAGE MINISTRIES



Become an AMM Minister

Perform Marriage for Friends and Family!

American Marriage Ministries is a non-denominational, interfaith Church. Our mission is to ensure that **all people have the right** to perform the spiritual act of marriage. We ordain those of all religious beliefs and philosophies that agree to our three core tenets:

- i. All people, regardless of race, gender, or sexual orientation, have the right to marry.
- ii. It is the right of every couple to choose who will solemnize their marriage.
- iii. All people have the right to solemnize marriage.

[Apply for Ordination](#)

Trademark/Service Mark Application, Principal Register

TEAS Plus Application

Serial Number: 86321469

Filing Date: 06/26/2014

NOTE: Data fields with the * are mandatory under TEAS Plus. The wording "(if applicable)" appears where the field is only mandatory under the facts of the particular application.

The table below presents the data as entered.

Input Field	Entered
TEAS Plus	YES
MARK INFORMATION	
*MARK	AMERICAN MARRIAGE MINISTRIES
*STANDARD CHARACTERS	YES
USPTO-GENERATED IMAGE	YES
LITERAL ELEMENT	AMERICAN MARRIAGE MINISTRIES
*MARK STATEMENT	The mark consists of standard characters, without claim to any particular font, style, size, or color.
REGISTER	Principal
APPLICANT INFORMATION	
*OWNER OF MARK	American Marriage Ministries
INTERNAL ADDRESS	Suite 280
*STREET	3800 Aurora Ave. North
*CITY	Seattle
*STATE (Required for U.S. applicants)	Washington
*COUNTRY	United States
*ZIP/POSTAL CODE (Required for U.S. applicants only)	98103
PHONE	206-447-8925
FAX	206-749-2006
EMAIL ADDRESS	XXXX
LEGAL ENTITY INFORMATION	
*TYPE	non-profit corporation
* STATE/COUNTRY WHERE LEGALLY ORGANIZED	Washington
GOODS AND/OR SERVICES AND BASIS INFORMATION	
* INTERNATIONAL CLASS	045

*IDENTIFICATION	Ecclesiastical services, namely, ordaining ministers to perform marriage ceremonies through a non-denominational, interfaith church
*FILING BASIS	SECTION 1(a)
FIRST USE ANYWHERE DATE	At least as early as 07/04/2009
FIRST USE IN COMMERCE DATE	At least as early as 07/04/2009
SPECIMEN FILE NAME(S)	\\TICRS\EXPORT16\IMAGEOUT 16\863\214\86321469\xml1\ FTK0003.JPG
SPECIMEN DESCRIPTION	Home page from Applicant's website describing Applicant's services and providing a means to purchase services.
ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS INFORMATION	
*TRANSLATION (if applicable)	
*TRANSLITERATION (if applicable)	
*CLAIMED PRIOR REGISTRATION (if applicable)	
*CONSENT (NAME/LIKENESS) (if applicable)	
*CONCURRENT USE CLAIM (if applicable)	
ATTORNEY INFORMATION	
NAME	Nancy V. Stephens
ATTORNEY DOCKET NUMBER	208585-1
FIRM NAME	Foster Pepper PLLC
INTERNAL ADDRESS	Suite 3400
STREET	1111 3rd Avenue
CITY	Seattle
STATE	Washington
COUNTRY	United States
ZIP/POSTAL CODE	98101
PHONE	206-447-8925
FAX	206-749-2006
EMAIL ADDRESS	stepn@foster.com
AUTHORIZED TO COMMUNICATE VIA EMAIL	Yes
OTHER APPOINTED ATTORNEY	Richard T. Black
CORRESPONDENCE INFORMATION	
*NAME	Nancy V. Stephens
FIRM NAME	Foster Pepper PLLC
INTERNAL ADDRESS	Suite 3400
*STREET	1111 3rd Avenue
*CITY	Seattle

*STATE (Required for U.S. applicants)	Washington
*COUNTRY	United States
*ZIP/POSTAL CODE	98101
PHONE	206-447-8925
FAX	206-749-2006
*EMAIL ADDRESS	stepn@foster.com;stepn@foster.com
*AUTHORIZED TO COMMUNICATE VIA EMAIL	Yes
FEE INFORMATION	
NUMBER OF CLASSES	1
FEE PER CLASS	275
*TOTAL FEE PAID	275
SIGNATURE INFORMATION	
* SIGNATURE	/Nancy V. Stephens/
* SIGNATORY'S NAME	Nancy V. Stephens
* SIGNATORY'S POSITION	Attorney
SIGNATORY'S PHONE NUMBER	206-447-8925
* DATE SIGNED	06/26/2014

Trademark/Service Mark Application, Principal Register

TEAS Plus Application

Serial Number: 86321469

Filing Date: 06/26/2014

To the Commissioner for Trademarks:

MARK: AMERICAN MARRIAGE MINISTRIES (Standard Characters, see [mark](#))

The literal element of the mark consists of AMERICAN MARRIAGE MINISTRIES.

The mark consists of standard characters, without claim to any particular font, style, size, or color.

The applicant, American Marriage Ministries, a non-profit corporation legally organized under the laws of Washington, having an address of
Suite 280,
3800 Aurora Ave. North
Seattle, Washington 98103
United States

requests registration of the trademark/service mark identified above in the United States Patent and Trademark Office on the Principal Register established by the Act of July 5, 1946 (15 U.S.C. Section 1051 et seq.), as amended, for the following:

For specific filing basis information for each item, you must view the display within the Input Table.

International Class 045: Ecclesiastical services, namely, ordaining ministers to perform marriage ceremonies through a non-denominational, interfaith church

In International Class 045, the mark was first used by the applicant or the applicant's related company or licensee predecessor in interest at least as early as 07/04/2009, and first used in commerce at least as early as 07/04/2009, and is now in use in such commerce. The applicant is submitting one(or more) specimen(s) showing the mark as used in commerce on or in connection with any item in the class of listed goods and/or services, consisting of a(n) Home page from Applicant's website describing Applicant's services and providing a means to purchase services..

[Specimen File1](#)

The applicant's current Attorney Information:

Nancy V. Stephens and Richard T. Black of Foster Pepper PLLC
Suite 3400
1111 3rd Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98101
United States

The attorney docket/reference number is 208585-1.

The applicant's current Correspondence Information:

Nancy V. Stephens
Foster Pepper PLLC
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Seattle, Washington 98101
206-447-8925(phone)
206-749-2006(fax)
stepn@foster.com;stepn@foster.com (authorized)

A fee payment in the amount of \$275 has been submitted with the application, representing payment for 1 class(es).

Declaration

The signatory believes that: if the applicant is filing the application under 15 U.S.C. Section 1051(a), the applicant is the owner of the trademark/service mark sought to be registered; the applicant or the applicant's related company or licensee is using the mark in commerce on or in connection with the goods/services in the application, and such use by the applicant's related company or licensee inures to the benefit of the applicant; the specimen(s) shows the mark as used on or in connection with the goods/services in the application; and/or if the applicant filed an application under 15 U.S.C. Section 1051(b), Section 1126(d), and/or Section 1126(e), the applicant is entitled to use the mark in commerce; the applicant has a bona fide intention to use or use through the applicant's related company or licensee the mark in commerce on or in connection with the goods/services in the application. The signatory believes that to the best of the signatory's knowledge and belief, no other person has the right to use the mark in commerce, either in the identical form or in such near resemblance as to be likely, when used on or in connection with the goods/services of such other person, to cause confusion or mistake, or to deceive. The signatory being warned that willful false statements and the like are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under 18 U.S.C. Section 1001, and that such willful false statements and the like may jeopardize the validity of the application or any registration resulting therefrom, declares that all statements made of his/her own knowledge are true and all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true.

Signature: /Nancy V. Stephens/ Date Signed: 06/26/2014

Signatory's Name: Nancy V. Stephens

Signatory's Position: Attorney

RAM Sale Number: 86321469

RAM Accounting Date: 06/27/2014

Serial Number: 86321469

Internet Transmission Date: Thu Jun 26 14:45:09 EDT 2014

TEAS Stamp: USPTO/FTK-XX.XXX.XXX.XXX-201406261445094

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Blog

Find the Perfect Officiant for Your Ceremony

Find the Perfect Officiant for Your Ceremony

Find the Perfect Officiant for Your Ceremony

Sometimes we get lost in the party planning aspect of a wedding. There's so much to cover – from choosing a venue to renting the right furniture – of course the logistics take a lot of attention. But no one in the “wedding business” wants planning to get in the way of a bride and groom enjoying their big day.

In the midst of wedding planning, it's important to remember that no matter how much fun the party is going to be, the ceremony is the reason it's all happening which is why you want to do it right and put ample amount of time into selecting the perfect person.

An officiant of a civil ceremony can be a member of a religious organization, but does not have to be. He or she is simply the person legally recognized by the state to lead and validate a wedding ceremony. Their technical legal responsibilities are quite straightforward: get ordained, get the bride and groom to exchange I do's, and file the marriage license; the details and specifications are up to you!

First things first, know the difference between a minister and officiant.

A Minister, Reverend, Pastor, Preacher, Rector, Priest etc. is an ordained professional and has the education and credentials from a specific denomination. Their credentials come from a seminary, church or ecclesiastical college. Most have had a church where they performed all the duties of a trusted spiritual leader. Along with this title comes the respect they are due for the education the experience they possess. And this translates into someone who can help you create the ceremony that is right for you. An officiant is usually someone who has completed a course of study from an online company or college in the art of performing a wedding. There are schools that train wedding officiants with very good curriculums to back up the title and these pros will do a lovely job of presiding over your wedding. This is ok if they are honest about it and tell you up front that they are not a Minister or call themselves Reverend.

How to begin...

As a wedding coordinator, I've seen thousands of ceremonies. And it pretty obvious when someone hasn't put much time or thought into who was going to perform the ceremony. They can tend to lack originality, the ceremony sounds like it's scripted, and the officiant seems to have just met the couple minutes before the ceremony given there aren't any personal touches to embody who they are as individuals and together as a couple.

Below are some tips and tricks to help you find the perfect person to officiate your ceremony!

The key to finding the right person, is starting early! This way you won't feel rushed into making a last-minute decision and **you avoid running the risk of finding the right person, but they are already booked on your wedding day.** Many officiants book out far in advance so they have ample time to dig deeper into the couple's relationship and get to know them.

I suggest trying to book at least 1 year to 9 months ahead of time. This way you can take your time and interview a few so that you are 100% confident and comfortable with the person you end up choosing.

Always meet them in person. As with anything else, first impressions are everything. You will know right away if you feel comfortable with them and if their personalities match with yours! Many times, your venue will offer officiants and ministers on their vendor list AND they will offer a vendor night where you can come and meet all of them in one night! I would highly encourage you to take advantage of their list, especially if you aren't completely set on using someone already. The more options you have and the more people you talk to, the more confident you will feel when you make your decision.

Being comfortable with them is the first sign of a perfect match. You will know instantly if someone makes you feel comfortable. Keep in mind you are trusting this person with your most important and intimate 20 minutes of your life. You want to feel comfortable in their presence for the sake of your wedding day and to make the process as seamless as possible. They are going to want to spend time with you prior to the wedding day, maybe even offer some pre-marital counseling.

Might seem obvious, but make sure they are the same affiliation as you. Maybe they aren't personally practicing that religion, but many times people can do multiple types of ceremonies. Make sure they can accommodate your needs!

At the end of the day, you are technically "hiring" this person, but it is so much more than a business transaction. It is a sacred union and you are trusting this person with the most important day of your life. They should take this as seriously as you do and seem genuine about caring about giving you the BEST ceremony for you two. This means they take the time to get to know you and make it as personal as possible.

Look for someone who has a very similar personality type as you and your fiancé! This will almost guarantee that your ceremony will be everything you want it to be. The officiant should be the voice of the ceremony, but they are projecting YOUR voice.

Talk price! Discuss their cost of the ceremony and ask detailed questions such as; what is included with that? Pre-marital counseling? Do they charge extra for traveling or charge for your legal registration? What if they stay the whole time?? There are some venues, such as a yacht wedding, where the officiant stays the entire night!

Make sure your officiant can sign your license. Every state has different procedures for clergy. In New York City, for example, an officiant must be registered with the City Clerk's Office—even a justice of the peace or a judge from another town—for at least 24 hours before they can sign the license. Some religious traditions offer a spiritual ceremony but expect the couple to be legally married at the Clerk's office. Don't assume, always ask, if the officiant is fully prepared to make the ceremony legal in your state.

Read reviews online! If the person has performed multiple ceremonies, with this day in age with Yelp and the internet, chances are there are reviews of them somewhere! While not all reviews are 1000% trustworthy, it is always smart to do your research and see what others say about your potential officiant to validate your own opinion!

Go with your theme! If you are having a wedding with a theme or your venue is something other than traditional, then this might be for you! If you are okay with straying away from the traditional feel, then don't be afraid to get creative! Bring your personality into the ceremony! For example, if you are having a wedding on a yacht, have a captain officiate the wedding! It is a subtle detail that brings your theme to life and makes it seem like you paid close attention to every detail!

Where to look...

If you are looking for a minister or want something traditional, look within your own spiritual community (i.e. at church) or within your family circle. Chances are, they know you best!

As previously mentioned, use the vendor list provided by your venue! They may not know you personally right off the bat, but that can change with time. This list is usually comprised of a bunch of very experienced professionals so you can be sure to trust them with your ceremony! They will take the time to get to know you over the course of your planning process and put together a great ceremony customized to you two!

Don't be afraid to ask for what you want!

Be upfront with what you are looking for in the ceremony. If you aren't completely sure then have a simple conversation and see what their suggestions are!

Ask tons of questions!

Some commonly asked questions to ask yourself AND the potential officiant when looking:

Are there any religious or cultural rituals you'd like to include in the ceremony?

How do you feel about the word 'God'?

Do you want any songs or readings in the ceremony?

What did you like about the last wedding you attended?

What did you dislike?

Do you want the officiant to refer to a script or improvise?

Will you write your own vows?

How long do you want the ceremony?

Do you want to have a rehearsal before the wedding?

Do you want a more formal or humorous ceremony?

Will you hold a religious or secular ceremony?

Have you budgeted for a wedding officiant?

Is experience an important factor in selecting a wedding officiant?

What are your expectations of the wedding officiant?

Will you follow a traditional order of service according to your faith or create your own ceremony service?

Will your wedding venue play a role in an officiant's availability?

Will you be required to attend premarital counseling?

What happens if the officiant cancels at the last minute?

Will the officiant perform your ceremony if you are not married in his/her church?

Will your wedding day affect the availability of certain officiants?

Finally, always allow them to ask you questions. The sign of a great officiant is one that collects stories from the couple – talk to them about how they met, what they like about each other, and funny memories. He also suggests talking to the friends and family of the couple to get a sense of where they each came from.

Regardless of who you choose, a minister, officiant, family member, or the captain of the ship, you should feel comfortable with them, have a clear idea of what you want for the ceremony, be able to perform a ceremony of the same religious affiliation, and click with your personality as a couple. Go with your gut and you will be fine!

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📅 July 21, 2017

👤 Thomas Fernandez (<http://www.electracruises.com/blog/author/tfernandez>)

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AWARDS

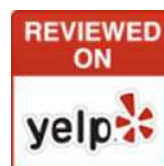
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South Jersey Officials

We are wedding officiants in southern New Jersey. Our goal is simple: Provide each couple we marry with an experience they will always remember. What's your dream wedding ceremony?

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2014

My name is Chaplain Patrick and I'm terrible at blogging.

I started this blog months and months ago. I was full of ideas. Then life and wedding season happened. So, tell me what you'd like to see in this blog. I'll do my best to make it happen.

Posted by [Chaplain Patrick](#) at [5:51 PM](#) [No comments:](#)

TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2014

Friend or Professional?

"Dear Chaplain Patrick, I have been asked by my friend to get ordained so that I can officiate her wedding. I was wondering if you have any tips or advice? I basically have no idea what I'm doing, so I figured I'd reach out to a pro!"



Wow! Congratulation that your friend wants you to be her officiant on her wedding day. She surely has a lot of trust and confidence in you! If you're thinking of following through, I must warn you, tread lightly. Research, research and research until your blue in the face and don't agree to do it until you know for sure that this is what **you** want. Again, what you want.

Friend or Customer?

Even if you plan to move forward and not charge your friend one cent, you still need to consider her your customer. Unfortunately, friends make the worst customers. Your friend is going to have expectations that you may or may not understand. Heck, she might not understand her own expectations.

What does your customer want?

What elements are important to her? Unless you are fully prepared with options to give her, you're going to seem unprepared. Is it fair that you should learn three-hundred ceremony elements just to have a conversation with her?

Are you planning the ceremony as a wedding gift?

Chances are, you are going to have to invest many, many hours into research and

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southjerseyofficials.com

BLOG ARCHIVE

▼ [2014](#) (5)

▼ [October](#) (1)

[My name is Chaplain Patrick and I'm terrible at bl...](#)

► [January](#) (4)

writing. If you're anything like I was when I started, you'll invest 60+ hours on your first (and possibly only) wedding ceremony. 60+ hours! Are you planning to give more than a weeks salary as a wedding gift? Are you expected to officiate AND give a gift? Yikes!



Don't forget the wedding vendors!

The photographer, videographer, coordinator, DJ/musicians are all going to rely on your cues to make everything go as it should. Are you going to inform them that you're new to this or will you proceed confidently?

Public Speaking

How comfortable are you? If your heart starts pounding in your chest or if a frog decides to take refuge in your throat, there won't be anyone there to bail you out. Remember that you need to clearly say the words to the ceremony with the right tone and emotion, but you also need to guide it at the same time. Multitasking is absolutely required here.

Expect the Unexpected

I have had the unpleasant experience of throwing out a drunken best man who insisted on making obscene comments during the ceremony. What are you going to do if there is a medical emergency? What if the maid of honor passes out? Yes, these have all happened. Everyone will be looking at you for guidance. What will you do?

Cover your Assets

As in everything, there is liability. What if you're in an accident on the wedding day or a family member is very ill and you're needed elsewhere? You absolutely **MUST** have a back-up plan. Do you have a clearly written and signed contract that will protect you and your interests as well as her interests? A lawsuit is never good for a friendship.

Fork in the Road

It can go two ways: A) It will be a wonderful and relationship enhancing experience for you both. B) It will be a stressful experience that you never expected. There is very real potential that an error or problem on that day can seriously damage your friendship.

We know your friend wants you to officiate. The question remains, do you want to officiate?

Why Choose a Professional

If you know nothing about carpentry, your friend wouldn't ask you make her custom kitchen cabinets. This isn't any different. Some things are best left to the professionals who do this everyday.

What do you want?

I want you to very seriously think about what you want without worrying of what your friend wants. You are about to embark on a gamble of time and stress. Do you play your cards or fold and cheer from the sidelines?

Whatever you choose. I wish you the best,

Patrick

Posted by [Chaplain Patrick](#) at [12:36 PM](#) 1 comment:

SATURDAY, JANUARY 18, 2014

Let's Elope! Who needs Vegas?

Who needs Vegas?

themed costume.

You need Vegas! If you want Elvis to marry you. Sorry, we don't dress in



Our team has had the pleasure of marrying many couples who eloped right here in South Jersey.

To really understand the best options for you, we first need to know.... Hey! What is an elopement anyway?

elope (ɪˈləʊp) - vb (intr) to run away secretly with a lover, esp in order to

marry.



In more modern times, elopements are not always about secretly running off to get hitched. Elopements are also small weddings that are planned in very little time.

So you've found THE ONE. You've already said yes but you have not said "i do" yet.

Without question, eloping is exciting! It doesn't matter to us if it will be just a few guests or if you're throwing the big gala with all the fixings. It is all about one thing: getting married. Your wedding ceremony is the most important piece of your wedding day. The ceremony should be warm and fun, romantic and inspirational. It should set the tone for a great celebration.

It's up to you to decide how to celebrate your nuptials. Go out on the town, snuggle on the couch with a bowl of popcorn or throw a ball for all your friends. The important thing to remember is that there is no right or wrong answer. There is only your answer. After all, it's your day... so make it yours!



If you have questions, just ask! We love weddings and we are happy to help!

www.elopesouthjersey.com

Posted by Chaplain Patrick at [10:09 AM](#)

No comments:

MONDAY, JANUARY 13, 2014

Write a Review. Save a Life. Remember Louie.

If you're my friend on facebook ([click to find me](#)), you know that I recently posted about the loss of my good friend and partner in crime, Louie.

Louie's age when I adopted him from a shelter was really unknown. The vet's best guess was that he was three years old. So, with his recent passing, the best guess is that he lived to the ripe old doggy age of fourteen. *That's 82 in human years. I had to*



look it up.

These past few days have not been easy. I'm trying to stay busy and, as my grandmother would say, *keep on keepin' on*. I've also been thinking of ways to pay tribute to my good boy Louie. A shrub or flower will be planted in the spring in memory of him. I'm having a favorite photo blown up

and framed for my office wall. These things are only in *memory* of him. I want to pay *tribute* to a good dog.

A good dog who, through no choice of his own, found himself in a shelter at the age of three.

A thought was born: **Write a Review. Save a Life. Remember Louie.**

In paying tribute to a good boy: In 2014, I will donate \$5 for each and every review posted to [WeddingWire](#), [TheKnot](#) or [Google](#). The donations will be made in memory of Louie and will be sent to The Animal Orphanage of Voorhees, NJ. It doesn't matter if it was Rev. Yvonne, Rev. Chrissey or myself who was your officiant. I will personally make the donation in honor of Louie's memory.

It will probably take less than fifteen minutes of your time if you post to all three sites. That will make for a \$15 donation. That's enough to feed one hungry pup for almost a month!

If we officiated your wedding, will you consider posting a review now? When posting, we only request complete honesty. We would never tell or even hint at what you should post! Reviews are about your experience, so be honest.

Write a Review. Save a Life. Remember Louie.

PS- If you're local to Audubon or if we have a meeting scheduled; I accept donations of needed items, 365 days a year. Donations of dog food, cat food, bedding, toys, treats, gift cards, etc are always needed. I typically hold items until there is enough to fill the back seat of the car and then I make the trip to drop off the items. Every little bit helps. Click [here](#) for a list of much needed supplies.

Lou! This is for you. Good boy! Always a good boy. I love you bud.
-Daddy (Chaplain Patrick)

Posted by [Chaplain Patrick](#) at [9:16 PM](#) [1 comment:](#)

Resolution

2014 RESOLUTION.

Blog more. It's the 13th of January already and this is the first post. I know, I know. I hear you loud and clear.

This is a new year and a brand new blog. I've decided to retire my previous blog, "Chaplain Patrick & Associates". The name changed in 2012 to South Jersey Officiants and it's about time that the blog reflect the same thing too. If you would like to check out the old blog, feel free to take a look [here](#).

2013 IN REVIEW

2013 was a very big year for us. Yvonne, Chrissey and I have been busy busy busy helping wonderful couples have a shining moment that they will forever remember. We have so many wonderful people to thank for posting reviews on Wedding Wire, The Knot and Google. It's thanks to these wonderful reviews that we were recipients of The Couples' Choice Award 2014 on Wedding Wire. Again, thanks to their reviews, we also received the 2014 Pick - The Knot Best of Weddings. We are thrilled to receive the Wedding Wire award for the third year in a row. This is our first award with The Knot so we are super psyched to receive this recognition too.



The most humbling part is that these awards are not picked by the folks at Wedding Wire or The Knot. These are entirely based on real reviews, from real couples writing their real truths. The love that was shown through these reviews... it's just mind boggling (and super appreciated). Thank you!

WHAT'S AHEAD

The 2014 calendar is quickly filling up. There are lots of fresh ideas in the air. The excitement doesn't end. We're branching out to provide elopements in Philadelphia and in Atlantic City. We partnered with Tricia of [Lilac Blossom Photography](#) to provide elopement couples with FANTASTIC photography for their special day.

This is also the year that I get married! I'm extremely excited to marry my best friend on September 20, 2014. I'm also very proud to have my good friend and associate, Reverend Yvonne, to preside over our ceremony. It is going to be epic to say the least.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?

We have a fresh blog and a fresh look to the website. What would you like to see us blog about? Leave us a comment! We would love to hear from you!!

Until next time,

Patrick

Posted by [Chaplain Patrick](#) at [9:45 AM](#)

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Hiring a Wedding Officiant Q&A

Pridezillas

 June 22, 2015

We had more questions for James Engmann & his wife Connie on working with your officiant to plan your big day!

What possibilities are there for the wedding ceremony itself?

In Marriage Equality states, the possibilities vary greatly. If a same-sex couple is able to find a willing church and clergy member, the couple will be limited by the liturgy of that church. Some choices may be available, but that is probably about it.

If a couple has a family member or friend get ordained on the internet if they hire an independent officiant, the possibilities are only limited by the Officiant's knowledge of and ability to research wedding possibilities.

Obviously, professionally trained and experienced Officiants will have much more to offer the couple in terms of ideas and possibilities.

One thing to watch: there are legal requirements which need to be addressed by the officiant. In some states, the couple just needs to sign the marriage license to be married but in many states, the couple

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know as the "I Do's" – "Do you take this man or woman to be your husband or wife?" It doesn't need to

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be those words but the question or questions ask must show that each member of the couple is there willingly and is capable of making a legal decision. The second requirement is for the officiant to pronounce them married.

How does marriage ceremonies differ in states who do not recognize same-sex weddings?

First, it needs to be understood that these will not be legal marriages. A couple can use the term in its generic sense to describe the ceremony where they commit to each other. But whether it is called a wedding or commitment or union ceremony, the good news is that there is no requirement to have a licensed or state-recognized officiant. The couple is free to have anyone they choose 'officiate' the ceremony because there are no legal ramifications to the ceremony which require judicial officer or clergy qualifications.

The same concerns exist here with having an amateur officiate the ceremony. A wedding ceremony should be glorious, focused on the couple and their love and their love story, and amateur or hobby officiants are not well prepared to provide such a service. So LGBT couples will need to research and find an officiant who will perform the ceremony they truly want to have.

Where do most ceremonies take place?

Obviously churches and synagogues. After that, the possibilities are endless. Government and public buildings, such as capitols and museums, are very popular. Hotels are also very popular because the guests can check in, attend the ceremony, enjoy the reception and turn in for the night without having to drive anywhere. After that, gardens and parks are highly sought after places for ceremonies. Some couples like to be married at home or in their backyard. If the couple has a special place, they should check to see if their ceremony can be there!

How long does a typical ceremony last?

A wedding ceremony before a judicial officer can be this short, less than one minute. For some couples, that is all they want because their main concern is just being married.

For most couples, they want some ritual that connects them and their marriage to something bigger than themselves, which can be love or their families and circles of friends or, for those who believe, a Higher Power. Some church weddings can last one-and-a-half or two hours – the vast majority of couples do not want that. Most wedding officiate by family member and friends and other non-professional officiants last between five and fifteen minutes.

What couples, straight and gay, don't realize is that their wedding ceremony can be an event that touches their funny-bones and their hearts, as well as those of their guests. The couple should ask themselves: Do we want our ceremony to be memorable in a good way and to have our guests feel closer to us and to each other as a result of attending the ceremony? That takes a little time. My life and business partner Connie and I recommend that ceremonies fall in the 20 to 30 minute range, long enough that everyone realizes that the marriage has truly taken place but short enough that their attention do

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Will officiants typically have standard language for the couple's vows?

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Again, if married in a church, the liturgy may require certain wedding vows to be said. Other officiants may have restrictions on what vows can be exchanged by the couple. It adds a wonderful element if the couple writes or at least chooses their vows. The traditional vows have great history behind them – many in attendance were married by them – but they are also predictable. We encourage couples to find or write vows that truly reflect them and the marriage they are creating.

Do you have any other tips to give same-sex couples on planning their wedding ceremony?

I do. And much of this applies to all of the wedding vendors they may have: wedding coordinator, photographer, disk jockey, you get the idea. Interview candidates until you find someone you connect with on a personal basis, someone you like. The wedding can be a very stressful time and you want wedding vendors whom you feel you can approach as need be.

The wedding ‘industry’ gets a bad wrap for two big reasons: incompetence and pricing. I have met hundreds of professional wedding vendors, 99% of whom want to do a great job for the couple and want the couple to recommend them to their family and friends. Once in a great while, one of these pros will fall short of expectations, but this happens in all industries.

Most of the complains about incompetence comes from having vendors who do this as a hobby, something they do in addition to their regular job for the ego lift and extra money. Many people aspire to be a wedding professional and most of them do not last five years. So if the vendor you are interested in has been in business less than five years, make sure you check on any testimonials they provide for you. Of course the best testimonial is the vendor you have seen work at a wedding or one referred to you by a happy family member or friend.

The second knock of the wedding industry – expense – is connected to the first. If you are hiring a professional, you are going to pay more money than if you hire an amateur or a hobby vendor. In many cases, wedding professionals have an office and support staff, on-going continuing education in their field, professional organization fees and advertising and other expenses. Once the expenses have been paid, the pro needs to make a profit to live on. Think about it: If you hire someone who is doing this for fun and for some extra dollars, will they be as committed to providing excellence as someone who makes their living in this way and who depends on a good reputation and referrals from happy clients? The short answer is “No.”

Specifically, in terms of the Wedding Officiant, find someone with whom you feel safe. You need to know that she or he will handle the emotions in a loving way. We have Brides and Grooms who get weepy during their vows. I have heard officiants made a joke of it, especially if the weepy person is male. We hold that as a sacred event so we lovingly wait until the person is ready, providing a tissue if necessary, and then going forward. Find an officiant who will do the same.

About Happily Ever After Wedding Officiants:

Connie and James co-create with you and officiate for you a special, personal, unique and memorable Commitment Ceremony, one that will touch your hearts and funny-bones, as well as those of your guests. The l
feelings you
from living together to. . .living Happily Ever After!

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James and Connie's couples voted them Wisconsin Bride Magazine's 2011, 2012, and 2013 Best Wedding Officiants in the state – they are the only officiants to have ever won this most prestigious honor! Their couples also reviewed their work such that they won the Wedding Wire Bride's/Couple's Choice Award in 2012, 2013 and 2014, and the Knot Best of Wedding Officiants Pick in 2012 and 2014. In addition, the National Association of Wedding Professionals honored them with their Service Award in 2012 and 2013. Finally, Wisconsin Capitol Pride has chosen them to co-officiate their yearly Commitment Ceremony in 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014.

For more information or to contact Happily Ever After Wedding Officiants:
www.happilyeverafterweddings.info

To view their Pridezillas listing and why they support marriage equality: www.pridezillas.com/happily-ever-after-wedding-officiants

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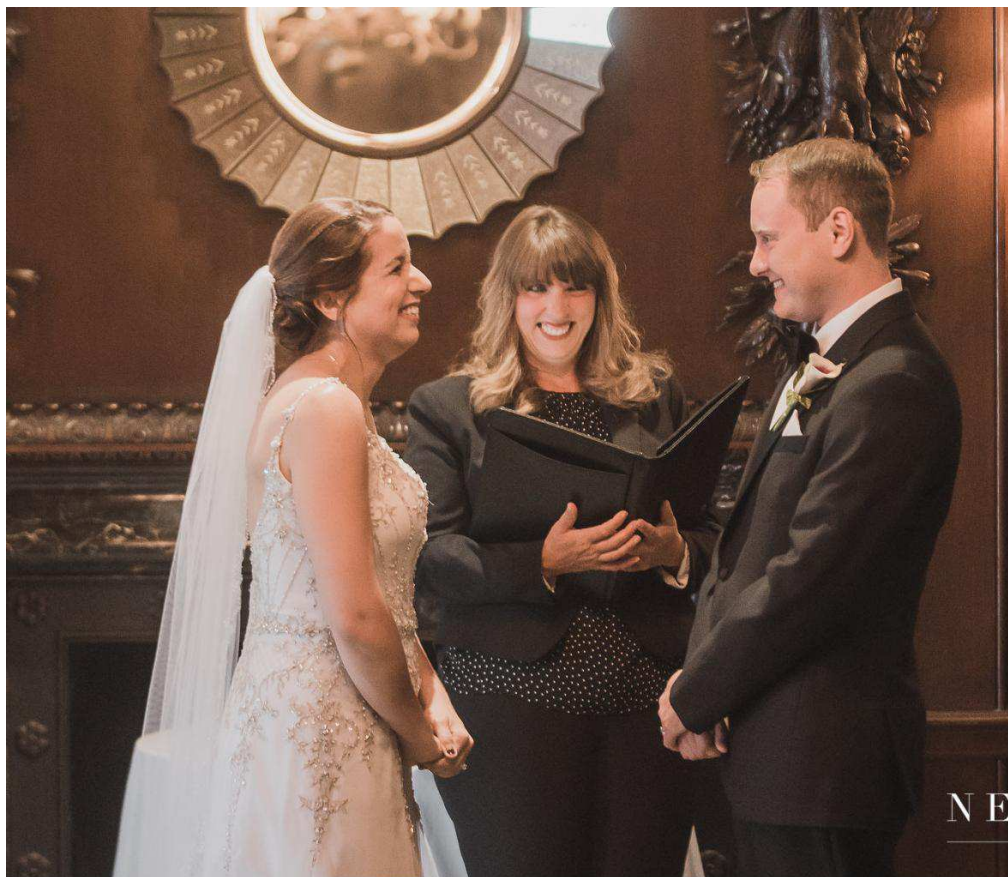
My name is Michelle Snyder and I became an ordained minister in April of 2007.

I'm a supporter of all who love each other and want to be married. Straight, gay, interracial, intercultural, everyone! All are entitled to their day of beauty.

This is how it all started: A couple of my friends in Buffalo, NY decided that they were ready to spend the rest of their lives together. They took the time to choose the date, the location, the dress, the flowers, the cake and a million other things. There was one thing that bothered them though. The most important part of the wedding, the officiant who would be sharing that moment with them, seemed out of their hands. They didn't want to just pick someone who was looking to cash in on their day. We talked about this together and I tried to think of a solution with them. They beat me to it. They asked me to get ordained and officiate for them. They thought that since I was a theatre major I would be a great speaker in front of the crowd and since I was a librarian, I would have access to literature that could help capture how they felt about each other. That was all the convincing it took for me to become a minister! It was an honor, and it was the most beautiful day. Since then I have performed weddings for many different couples, some I've known and some I only met a short time before their wedding. I've been lucky enough to work in large halls, small bars, and even some family rooms. I meet with every couple first and get to know them so that it's not just a generic ceremony...

It's yours.
As it should be.
Always, all ways

And now meet YellowBird Weddings other officiant, Karen!



“My name is **Karen Younus** and I am absolutely thrilled to be working with my sister Michelle in the quest for helping all those out there to have their most beautiful of wedding days! In my day to day life I work with those people that are most in need out in the community. I was more than excited when Michelle asked me if I could become ordained and work with her out there in the community but in a different way. On the best of days...people’s wedding days where love and happiness is simply floating in the air. I love working with people and for me this is another way for me to do that. Since then I have officiated countless weddings and have loved each and every couple that I have met in their own beautiful and unique way. I am a lover of all things simple yet beautiful and am very proud to be a part of YellowBird Wedding!”

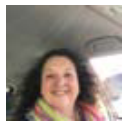
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Banner of yellow birds painted by Angela Moulton.

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WHAT DOES A WEDDING OFFICIANT DO?



Next

*An officiant, or celebrant, is responsible for: 1. creating your ceremony
2. getting the marriage license signed and mailed and 3. performing your ceremony. Some questions to ask a prospective officiant include:*

who are you ordained by;

is it legal for you to perform marriages in my State; and

do you have back-up available in case something happens to you on our Wedding Day.

How do you find an officiant in your area? There are several ways: Craigslist, WeddingWire.com, TheKnot.com, Gigsalad.com, Thumbtack.com. You can also simply perform a Google search for "Officiant" and your location.

Some couples choose a friend or family member to get ordained to perform the ceremony. While this works out in a lot of cases, why leave anything to chance? By hiring a professional, you're securing the most important part of the day—actually getting married. An officiant performs in front of the public all the time and they know how to make your ceremony shine. So leave the officiating to a professional and let your friends and family simply enjoy the day.

Your officiant will, hopefully, meet in person with you and your partner to get to know you and begin creating your wedding ceremony. They will likely have questions for you about you met your partner, how long you've been together and, perhaps, your favorite thing about your partner.

Once they have gathered all the information they need from you, the magic starts. Your officiant should email and/or text a copy of the ceremony to you for edits and additions. At this stage, your officiant should have helped you choose a Special Reading and a Unity Ceremony, if you desire. A Special Reading is simply a passage that reflects your relationship and feelings towards each other. A Unity Ceremony is a physical demonstration of your commitment to each other. Common Unity Ceremonies include candle lighting, pouring of sand, lantern release and tree plantings.

By now, all the parts of your ceremony should be in place and look something like this:

Welcome and Introductions

Short talk about marriage

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Special Reading

Declaration of Intent ("I Do's")

Vow Exchange

Exchange of Rings

Unity Ceremony

Pronouncement

The Kiss

Another service that many officiants offer is orchestration of the rehearsal. It is vital to practice where everyone will stand and how the wedding party should walk down the aisle.

An officiant is a great resource to have during rehearsals as they can provide much-needed answers to questions about what goes on during the ceremony.

Another offering is premarital counseling. Not every officiant does this, so check when you are interviewing them. Your officiant can hold one or more sessions with you to talk about what marriage is like and what it takes to have a successful marriage.

On your Big Day, your officiant should arrive early to check in with you and to get settled. Most officiants are willing to lend a hand in whatever way is needed.

Finally, the adventure begins as you and your partner meet at the end of aisle and your officiant performs the ceremony.

Cost varies with location and experience. Many officiants offer several packages that allow you to have exactly the type of wedding you want. Typical costs for an officiant run from \$100 on up. Be sure to ask your officiant what is included in their basic fee. Most officiants charge extra for mileage and conducting/attending rehearsals.

Hiring a professional officiant will take you a long way toward having the wedding day you're dreaming about.

I would be honored to be your wedding officiant. Please call or text Lauren at 417-300-0216. Check out www.laurenweds.com for more information.

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SO YOUR FRIEND HAS ASKED YOU TO OFFICIATE PART I

July 27, 2015 by Betsy Simpson (https://www.naninasinthepark.com/2015/07/27/so-your-friend-has-asked-you-to-officiate-part-i/)

Officiating a wedding for the first time is nerve-racking to say the least. Unless you're a country clerk or a religious minister, then it's highly likely you've had no training whatsoever. Even from personal experience that it's a little daunting. Suddenly it's time to get ordained and start practicing. No pressure, right?

Like anything, all it takes is time and practice. But first things first, you need to get ordained.

These days, it seems like anyone who took an elective in Theology can get a certificate of Ordination. But what's truly important is that whatever religion or personal philosophy that you practice make sure that it falls in line with what the couple want. As long as the vows or scriptures sound good to you, it's the couples' show. Make sure that you serve at their pleasure. Perhaps the biggest pitfall an inexperienced officiant can fall into is thinking that the wedding is about them.

- Get your ordination as early as possible. It can take time for the county clerk to officially recognize your ordination. You don't want to be under the gun making sure you're ready for your friends.
- The easiest and most recognizable place to get ordained is the Universal Life Church. The ULC is (https://www.naninasinthepark.com) dedicated to celebrating the beauty of marriage no matter the background of the applicant.

- Print out a copy of your certificate of ordination (or better, have an official one mailed to you) and make copies.

- Contact the county clerk. Both to share your credentials and to find out if there are any other steps they will need in order to provide you with a marriage license. **NOTE:** the requirements for Ordination changes state to state and county to county. For ease here is a link to the **county**

(http://usmarriagelaws.com/search/united_states/new_jersey/marriage) along with a brief overview of NJ marriage laws.

- Discuss the vows as soon as possible. In a typical ceremony, the minister has a playbook. If your friends are asking you to become ordained, then chances are you'll be asked to Hash out if you will recite their vows, or if they plan on reciting their own.

Click here (https://www.naninasinthepark.com/2015/05/30/working-tone-wedding-vows/) for the COVID-19 update.

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- Hash out any and all traditions ahead of time as well. Such as literally tying the knot, and the unity candle (<https://www.theparksavoy.com/wedding-lexicon-101-the-unity-candle/>).

The sooner all of this is taken care of, the sooner you can get to practicing these traditions (preferably daily). The final stages of preparation and conducting the ceremony will be covered in Part II.

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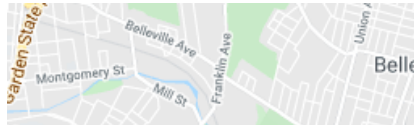
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Home / Common Questions

What is your Denomination?

Although we are Christians, we serve our couples as a Non-Denominational Chaplains. This allows us to better serve our couples and help in acknowledging all beliefs and faiths however the benefit of using a Chaplain is; We serve couples without a hidden religious or personal agenda. It's your wedding day, not ours!

Are you certified to perform ceremonies?

Yes, of course, we meet the requirements of not only the State of California but across America. BUT, please don't let the word "Certified or Licensed" give you peace of mind with your Officiant choice. In California there is NO LICENSE OR CERTIFICATION training or requirements. Some Officiants/Celebrants add these words to sound.. well, sound better? Here's a scary thing; Did you know that by simply going online you can get ordained and by sending \$25 you get a legitimate ordination certificate? Here's one better, you can get your dog, cat or goldfish or whoever else ordained? You can actually do it for someone else without them knowing!!!! Being certified and having a religious title (you get to choose the title you want when you order online) does not automatically mean experienced. Not to say those wedding celebrants that have this type of certification are not legal nor are they any less or more qualified to perform a wedding ceremony. We simply state this so you fully understand that there is more to performing a ceremony than the certificate one holds. Remember that your ceremony is the reason everyone has gathered and you want to make sure the person performing your ceremony is experienced to handle not only the ceremony but all the little "Ooops" and "Uh-Oh's" that can....and will happen during the ceremony.

Do you work with Wedding Coordinator/Planners?

Of course and we have a wonderful reputation with many of the areas professionals however, but, alas.... One must remember that your wedding day is actually two separate events; Your Ceremony and Your Reception. Although most event planners participate in the ceremony by making sure the florists, DJ or musicians and staff have everything ready and will usually participate in the sending out and receiving of the wedding party (Processional and Recessional) they are not clergy and those who intrude into the ceremony planning and in the ceremony on the day of the event are going beyond the scope of their experience and authority, this intrusion is unwelcome and unprofessional.

Do you have any restrictions or rules for photographers/videographers?

Only two; first, don't embarrass my bride and groom and second, do not stop the processional or recessional for a photograph. Other than that, it's wide open. The way I see it; you're spending a lot of money to capture these memories, who are we to set restrictions? This makes us some of the more popular Officiants with the many professional photographers in the area. (NOTE: Do keep in mind that some churches have rules regarding ceremony photography and you should check with the venue.)

I am paying for a "Package" that includes everything but we're unhappy with the Officiant they provide (preferred vendors list), can we still use your services?

Of course and good for you for not "settling"! As your ceremony is the main focus of your day, you should find an Officiant that is a direct reflection of the two of you and allows you to be creative in the ceremony process rather than someone the company has made a arrangement with. We do not contract third party nor do we become part of any "Package" or rate. We work directly with each couple to avoid any misunderstandings or leave the impression that we

We're very social...



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are part of a group. Sadly, many companies have back room handshake arrangements with wedding vendors and will only work with or refer these individuals and even though you have paid a package rate and they will not be using "their" Officiant, more than likely they will not compensate or refund any part of their fee and you will have to hire me independently. This happens quite often and we would hope that sometime in the near future these types of companies (one stop shopping and backroom deals) will learn that the ceremony Officiant should be an independent process rather than making a big profit, if not for anything else other than; What's best for the couple!

Do you overbook your day?

Not at all and as of today, we have never been late to a wedding! Sadly, some Officiants will and, if just one starts late or runs late, those that the Officiant has scheduled after suffer greatly. I plan my schedules around my couples needs. Unless asked otherwise, we arrive 45-60 minutes early to assure the couple that we are ready to go.

Do you attend the reception?

99% of the time, no. Lets be honest, in most cases the only two people we know will be the two of you and following the ceremony and during the reception, the two of you are rather busy (LOL). Finding the right table is also a tough one and your guests have no idea just who we are and how fun and contemporary we can be. This leads to no one at the table dancing, drinking, smoking or doing the chicken dance! We have learned over the years that this saves my couples a lot of money too. Take the per-head charge and enjoy a nice lunch on your honeymoon! (Note: Remember this as you interview Officiants, some require that their spouse attend as well (for the same reasons above) and you need to consider this for your budget and head count.)

What about references?

Sure, simply click on the links on the left to read reviews from both couples AND Wedding vendors..

What do you charge?

That's a tough question to answer without first talking to you and discussing your ceremony plans. I need to know what you expect from me too, like do I need to dress like Elvis or jump from a plane? The fees for Officiant services in the area are anywhere from \$200 to \$800. We're in the middle of this average average. We're not trying to avoid or side-step the question. You should meet with at least 3 Officiants and put the same amount of research into selecting your Officiant as you have for your table linens and cake. All we suggest is; just make one one of the three. we'll even send you home with our ceremony handbook and paperwork you'll need for your wedding... best thing is, the meeting won't cost you a thing but a little time and you get to keep everything. Just our way of saying thank you for meeting with us and for your consideration. Plus, meet with us first and we'll even give you the questions to ask an Officiant so you'll be even more prepared for the other interviews.

Do you have a sound system?

This is a very tricky thing. There are literally hundreds of D-Jays and entertainment companies in San Diego and most claim to be able to provide ceremony sound and charge an additional fee to provide it. The most common mistake is; they won't spend the money for the right equipment for the ceremony. Most place a wireless microphone (the one they use for the reception events) on a stand (or no stand at all) and viola! there's the sound and they go back on focusing on the music portion. In our opinion, there is nothing worse than seeing a minister trying to juggle a book and your rings while trying to hold a microphone in his face (excuse me, can you hold this for a moment) or worse yet, all those beautiful ceremony photos with a big black microphone in your faces. Yuck! As a solution, if your sound professional does not have a lapel microphone, as a courtesy, we have a wireless AND a wired lapel microphone that we bring and use at **no charge**. Plus, we offer a sound system for the ceremony at a very low fee.. [CLICK HERE](#) for more info.

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DJ & Lighting | Sound Design

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Photography | Desert Aloha Photogr

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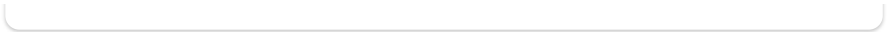
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Your Amazing Relationship Blogs

Assumption of Ordination

📅 August 1, 2017 at 🕒 4:52 pm



What Assumption of Ordination am I Referring To???

Sometimes I wonder if I think conducting a wedding is more important than it is. Haven't we all been so close to something and we make assumptions of its importance when it doesn't mean much at all? Ordination certainly fits into that category these days given rock stars and TV celebrities are doing weddings for fans and family more often than not.

When I talk with new brides or grooms, there's times I get the feeling the ceremony that makes their relationship legal and official is no big deal to them. This especially comes across when they say they have a friend who is a public speaker and she or he has decided to get ordained so they can conduct the wedding ceremony.

A Couple's Assumption

There's an assumption that the chosen friend or family member is comfortable fitting into the role of being an officiant. And knows what he or she is doing. Like it or not, a role is being played when anyone, including me, takes on the responsibility of being an officiant. I'm expected (as much by myself as anyone) to know what I'm doing, why I'm doing it, and be able to do it well.

My Assumption

I make this assumption: Given the fact that a person has to be ordained rather than simply licensed to officiate carries a spiritual tone to it. And my assumption includes whether the participants acknowledge this concept or not. I'm not talking about being religious, with dogma and history and followers attached to a practice. I'm talking about being aware of the unseen forces that have brought a couple together to learn and grow within the relationship. And their growth is being projected into the forever future. Yep, until death do them part.

Not Only Important but Legal

I mean, think about it. The officiant is the person proclaiming the marriage not only important and meaningful, but legal. Anything you or I truly value means we'll tend to it carefully and consistently, we'll take care of it. That can bring a lot of joy. Something legal can mean a whole lot of trouble if it goes wrong, and give rights and protections when it goes well.

So being an officiant is more than being a public speaker. Being an officiant means being a gate keeper, a person who conducts a right of passage for two people who say they're ready to go from one level of their relationship to another.

Being an officiant means being a gate keeper, a person who conducts a right of passage for two people who say they're ready to go from one level of their relationship to another.

A Reluctant Officiant

Recently a person I had officiated for came to me and told me he'd gotten ordained because his soon-to-be sister-in-law assumed he'd be great at leading a wedding ceremony because he spoke to the public as part of his job. He'd agreed to and got his ordination certificate online.

Soon afterwards he began to feel uncomfortable with the responsibility and asked me if I would conduct the ceremony. He talked about **public speaking for him was not the same as leading a wedding ceremony** (http://www.ehow.com/list_7677144_disadvantages-public-speaking.html). I offered to coach him and help him gain more confidence. But in his case, he really wanted to be a guest rather than a leader. He preferred to help in other areas. (I saw him leave to run errands a couple of times before and after the ceremony). Public speaking was about his work life. By his decision, I could now officiate for a very creative, new couple. I was also able to help out this very good natured, and kind person.

Commitment

My commitment is to help every couple have a memorable, meaningful, fabulous wedding ceremony. My couples have been wonderful and have **many great things to say** (<https://northern-michiganweddingofficiants.com/best-northern-michigan-wedding-officiant/about-rev-crystal/gratitudes-recommendations/>) about their experience with the ceremony and heart-felt delivery I provide. I can't do **every** ceremony. Nor am I the right person to officiate for everyone who's interested in my services.

But I'm very good at what I do. I love being an officiant. I enjoy being a part of the important commitment two people make to one another. They've looked for years to find this person they'll say "For better or for worse" to.

A Little Prodding

An unprepared, though good intentioned officiant may feel "for worse" thinking about the responsibility. Sometimes all someone needs to lead a better wedding ceremony the first time is a little coaching. Perhaps just a little prodding in the right direction. Some knowledge can help them do the great job he or she truly wants to do.

My assumption of ordination is the couple gets to choose the right person to lead their ceremony. But their public speaking newly ordained friend needs more knowledge. He or she wants the confidence to step into the role given to them.

From Basic to Brilliant

I can help — a LOT. Accordingly, I am about to launch a new branch of Northern Michigan Wedding Officiants. Introducing **Friend and Family Officiants**: How to Take Your Wedding Ceremony from Basic to Brilliant.

EVERY couple deserves to have a great experience at their wedding. I can help by leading their ceremony or by coaching the person they think will be right for them. I'll be leading a 3-hour class at Northern Michigan College on September 26. **Contact me** (<https://northern-michiganweddingofficiants.com/best-northern-michigan-wedding-officiant/contact-us/>) and I'll be glad to send you information.

As a couple you have every right to make choices. Whatever your assumption about ordination is, I want to help it be one of confidence, competence and brilliance. **Contact me** (<https://northern-michiganweddingofficiants.com/best-northern-michigan-wedding-officiant/contact-us/>) and we can discuss how.

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HOW TO BECOME A WEDDING OFFICIANT

GREAT CEREMONIES BEGIN HERE

(/)



(/resources/how-to-become-wedding-officiant/)Are you interested in becoming a wedding officiant? Perhaps you've just performed a friend or family member's wedding ceremony and you had a great time doing it, or maybe you're just curious about what it takes to become an officiant – either way, we are here to help you on your path to a fun, rewarding career.

WeddingOfficers.com (/) – The Wedding Officiant Directory is a top resource on the web for couples searching for officiants, and for information and advice to help officiants start and grow their businesses.

Becoming a marriage officiant isn't a decision to be taken lightly, but if you're sincere and earnest and are willing to put in the work, it is an extremely rewarding career path. There are few jobs that involve working closely with people on something truly special and meaningful to their lives, which is what makes being an officiant so special. Whether you ultimately decide to build your own business or work for an established officiant company, getting started is the hardest part. Below, we'll give you the specific steps you'll need to take to become a marriage officiant in your area, as well as the potential issues you may encounter along the way. Before we get started, you may have a few basic questions about officiants and we have several excellent articles we highly recommend reading:

- **What is a Wedding Officiant? (/what-is-a-wedding-officiant/)** – The definition of a wedding officiant, and the differences between an amateur and a professional wedding officiant.
- **Wedding Officiant Cost (/wedding-officiant-cost/)** – Our most popular article, discussing officiant fees and the average cost of a wedding officiant.
- **Why You Should Hire a Professional Officiant (/why-you-should-hire-a-professional-officiant/)** – Our advice to engaged couples on hiring a professional officiant to perform their wedding ceremony.

Assuming you're ready to get started, read below to get started on the path to becoming an officiant – once you've finished, be sure to take a look at the rest of our site, including our directory of local wedding officiants!

CHECK YOUR LOCAL LAWS

Because you will be fulfilling the legal duty of certifying a marriage license as a wedding officiant, you need to familiarize yourself with the local laws anywhere you will be performing a wedding ceremony. Check the wedding officiant laws by state, and also research at the county and city level to see what the different rules and regulations are for marriage officiants. In some states, practically anyone can perform a wedding ceremony – in others, it can be next to impossible to get legal authorization to perform marriages unless you are the minister at a church with an active congregation. Most states in the US have fairly relaxed requirements for who can legally perform a wedding ceremony, but certain states like West Virginia, Massachusetts, and Arkansas have laws that make it extremely difficult to obtain authorization to perform marriages and prior registration and approval from the court is required.

It is absolutely critical that you understand all of the local marriage license laws that apply to any area you are planning to operate as a wedding officiant. Performing a wedding ceremony as an unauthorized officiant is illegal in some jurisdictions, even carrying the possibility of prison time for offenders. For example, the penalty for “celebraing a marriage without a license” in the Commonwealth of Virginia is punishable by a fine of no more than \$500 and no more than one year in jail (Code of Virginia § 20-28). In addition to penalties for the officiant, marriages performed by unauthorized officiants in some states may be deemed invalid by the local court – in which case, marriages performed by that officiant would not be legally recognized by the state and the couples they performed ceremonies for would not be legally married. Because of these potential issues, it is always in your best interests to do your due diligence in researching your local marriage license laws.

GET ORDAINED

While it is possible (and even easy) in some jurisdictions to perform legal marriages without ordination by a religious organization, we highly recommend getting ordained if you are planning on becoming a professional wedding officiant. Religious ordination gives you the most possible options for performing the rite of marriage in different states and counties, and eliminates many of the headaches of obtaining legal authorization to perform marriages in states where the marriage laws are particularly tough. Under Oklahoma law, for example, the only persons who may obtain the required pre-authorization to perform a legal marriage are judges and ordained clergy (Oklahoma Code §43-7) and there are no provisions under Oklahoma state law for any other persons to obtain authorization.

The benefits of religious ordination for wedding officiants are twofold – one, it is easiest to obtain legal authorization to perform marriages in any jurisdiction by using religious ordination credentials and, two, it can make it easier to sell your officiant services to potential couples if you are also ordained. It's often the case that, even if the couple hiring you doesn't care about your religious ordination (or lack thereof), their parents or other relatives may be offended or uncomfortable with a wedding ceremony that isn't performed by a religious figure. That may seem outdated or even silly to you, but it may sometimes mean the difference between earning a couple's business and not – especially if their parents are paying for their wedding. Thankfully, it's relatively easy to get ordained online, but be forewarned that not all ordinations are created equal. If you are trying to get authorized to perform marriages in a state that has stringent marriage laws, those states may not recognize religious ordinations obtained online or may favor certain ordinations over others. For more information on this topic, see our article "[How to Get Ordained \(/get-ordained/\)](/get-ordained/)".

SET UP YOUR BUSINESS

If you're just starting out as a wedding officiant, you'll need to first decide whether you want to set up your own officiant business or work for an established officiant company. Each has their own advantages – if you have a full-time job and only want to perform weddings on the weekends for extra money, then working for someone else may be the best fit for you. In addition to being exciting and rewarding, starting and running a small business can be difficult and time-consuming. If you don't have a significant amount of time to put into starting an

officiant business, or if you aren't willing to invest in a good website and advertising, then you should strongly consider working for an existing officiant company. Most major markets have one or more multi-officiant companies, and larger firms with good reputations will often be able to send a full schedule of weddings to their staff. Be sure that you understand the terms

of any agreement you sign with a company to ensure that it isn't excessively restrictive or cumbersome – some companies keep their staff as employees, while others operate more like a general contractor or referral service.

If you have the time, the money, and the passion to start your *own* business, then the first thing you'll need to do is decide whether to operate as a sole proprietorship or to form a corporation or limited liability company. We recommend speaking with an attorney or CPA in order to decide what's right for you and your business – there can be significant differences between each option in terms of liability and taxation. Next, you'll need to set up your online presence, including a good website and social media pages for your business. You'll also need to consider whether you want to create any kind of physical marketing collateral such as business cards or postcards. Business cards really are a must for anyone in the wedding industry, you'll need them for your marketing efforts and to give to the other wedding professionals you work with. Consider joining a networking or trade organization for wedding professionals in your area as well – referrals from other wedding vendors are a great source of high-quality leads, which makes your relationships with other wedding professionals very valuable.

Remember that you'll need to consider carefully the amount that you'll charge for performing a wedding ceremony. It can be tempting to offer your services for a few hundred dollars even though the average cost of a wedding officiant ([/wedding-officiant-cost/](#)) is much higher.

Unfortunately, many new officiants make the mistake of under-pricing their services, creating an inescapable feedback loop of low-paying customers that result in low-paying referrals. This eventually makes it practically impossible for them to make enough money to afford better advertising to grow their business and eventually become a full-time wedding officiant. You'll need to decide for yourself how much you need to charge in order to make your business viable, and you'll need to come up with a comprehensive marketing and advertising plan, including a marketing budget.

JOIN THE OFFICIANT ASSOCIATION

If you're serious about building a sustainable career as a professional wedding officiant, then joining the International Association of Professional Wedding Officiants (IAPWO) (<http://iapwo.org/>) may be the single smartest decision you can make. The IAPWO offers

educational content, networking opportunities, and member discounts for many products and services your business needs, as well as producing an annual wedding officiant conference.

We are proud to be an official partner of the IAPWO, and WeddingOfficers.com offers discounted advertising packages and upgraded directory placement to IAPWO members. For

more information about IAPWO benefits or to become a member, visit [IAPWO.ORG](http://iapwo.org/) (<http://iapwo.org/>).

MARKETING YOUR OFFICIANT BUSINESS

If you already have a lot of experience performing ceremonies and are ready to jump in head first, then concentrate your efforts on finding the right places to advertise online. Free classified sites like Craigslist are obviously cost-effective, but couples searching for an officiant on these types of sites rarely want to pay officiants a professional rate to perform their wedding and competition is high. Lead-referral sites like Thumbtack and Respond.com promise to send you plenty of customers, which they may be able to do, but they also encourage competition based on price and then take a percentage of your money on top of it. These sites can be good for officiants who are just starting out and need to find low-paying “gigs” to boost their experience, but you will rarely find experienced, professional officiants advertising their services on those sites. Conversely, there are top-tier directory sites like WeddingWire, The Knot, and WeddingOfficers.com which have great search placement and a large number of couples looking for officiants online. Advertising on these sites may be expensive for a new business, so you’ll need to evaluate what makes the most sense for you based on your budget. At WeddingOfficers.com, we have several cost-effective [advertising plans \(/join\)](#) starting as low as \$12 per month.

Making wise marketing decisions can be difficult, especially in a niche industry like weddings. It can be very helpful to get the advice of established wedding professionals you respect, because chances are they’ve made most of the decisions (and mistakes) that you are facing as a new business owner. Seeking guidance from other wedding business owners can be invaluable, so don’t be shy about asking for help – it may just mean the difference between success and failure. Then again, if starting a new business sounds like more trouble than it’s worth to you, then perhaps you should consider working for someone else and letting *them* worry about it!

BECOME AN OFFICIANT TODAY

Ready to move forward with becoming a marriage officiant? We hope you have found this information useful, and we wish you the best of luck with your new career. We encourage you to explore the rest of the [Officiant Resources \(/resources/\)](#) available on our site, and we hope you will consider joining **WeddingOfficers.com – The Wedding Officiant Directory**. To view

our different advertising options, [visit our membership page \(/join/\)](#)!

FIND A WEDDING OFFICIANT

If you're ready to find local wedding officiants in your area, search our directory now!

WeddingOfficers.com has been connecting couples with local officiants since 1999 and is home to The Wedding Officiant Directory ([/directory/](#)), a trusted network of top-rated Wedding Officiants (<https://weddingofficiants.com>) around the globe.

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**The Hollywood Reporter** @THR · Sep 17, 2018

Watch Glenn Weiss' live #Emmys proposal: "You wonder why I don't like to call you my girlfriend? Because I want to call you my wife"
thr.cm/YaQb72



3

**Fr. Anthony Ferguson** @FatherFerg · Nov 5, 2019

Spring semester class enrollment at the seminary involves extremely loud noises at 7AM.

It warms my heart that this is the last time I'll ever need to sign up for classes
[#GetORDAINED](#)



2



1



78

**Jack Dylan** @thisisjackdylan · Apr 10, 2015

Just got [#Ordained](#). Nbd. [#GetOrdained](#) youtu.be/RTU8kPOj4I8



1



3

**American Marriage Ministries** @ammofficants · Mar 8, 2017

AMM believes that women can be ANYTHING including ordained ministers!
Happy International Women's Day! [#internationalwomensday](#) [#getordained](#)



1



1



2

**Dylan Bruce** @DylanBruce · Sep 18, 2017

.@YulVazquez I think I just figured out your new side hustle. [#MidnightTexas](#)
[#getordained](#)



2



9



63


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Menu



{Real Bride Series} Meet Ashley!

by BabydollWeddings | Oct 1, 2015 | Micky, real brides, Seville Golf Course | 0 comments

Ashley is a sweet bride from Texas who married Garrett

at the Seville Golf Course in December 2014.

Their romantic ceremony was filled with many ethereal touches and captures the essence of their love story perfectly.

Read more about the their special day below!



How did you and your groom meet?

The weekend after I graduated high school, a mutual friend of ours threw a graduation party for all of us. Garrett happened to be on leave from the Coast Guard and in Arizona at the time and decided to

drop by to see his old friend. Our friend introduced us and we hit it off immediately. From that day forward we became really good friends and that friendship eventually turned into a wonderful relationship.

We are dying to know, how did he propose?!

AMM NOR 00547

We had planned a San Antonio weekend with some good friends of ours. On the second night, Garrett managed to get one of the Cinderella horse drawn carriages to take us on a ride through some of the historical sections of the San Antonio Riverwalk (seeing as I am a big history buff and love that kind of stuff). He had the carriage stop in front of the church that President Johnson married his wife in, under the rouse that we were going to get out and take pictures. He pretended to trip out of the carriage when getting out and turned around on one knee with my ring in his hand. After 6 years of being together, he still managed to completely surprise me and our good friends (who ended up being our witnesses at our wedding) were there to capture the whole thing for us.





What were your wedding colors? Did you have an overall theme?

We had no theme but our wedding colors were black, silver, and blush pink. We were going for a romantic winter feel.

How large was your wedding party?

5 girls and 5 guys – All good friends and family, the perfect group

Where did your ceremony and reception take place? Was there any special meaning behind the choice of venue(s)?

We had our ceremony and reception at Seville Country Club in Gilbert, AZ. There was no special meaning for the venue, but it was beautiful and affordable, something we were looking for.

What kind of flowers did you have in your bouquet and the ceremony/ reception?

My bouquet consisted of carnations, calla lilies, and blush pink roses. It was perfect for the wedding and matched the colors and overall feel of the wedding perfectly.

What was the flavor of your wedding cake? Did you have a groom's cake?

We chose to just do a wedding cake and no groom's cake. Our wedding cake was a three tier square cake. The bottom and top tier was an almond vanilla cake with Bavarian buttercream filling. The middle tier was a spice cake with cinnamon cream filling (perfect for the holiday season). It was the best cake I have ever had.

What details from your wedding that made it unique to you?

The major detail in our wedding that made it unique to us was that we had his father marry us. We did not want to have just anybody marry us, so we asked his father to get ordained. It made our wedding that much more special to us; to be married by him solidified our families joining and the love we all now share.

Other than marrying your husband, what was your favorite moment from your wedding day?

My favorite moment would have to be getting ready with my girls before the wedding. The whole morning was spent talking and laughing and just enjoying each other's company. It kept my mind off the wedding and I was able to relax and enjoy myself.

What is one piece of wisdom you learned from your planning experience that you would like to share with future brides?

The major thing I learned is that most wedding stress is caused by the engaged couple overreacting about the little things. Don't stress the little things. Everything

AMM NOR 00552

will come together the way it was meant to. Make your engagement a happy time, not a stressful one.

Who were some of the other vendors that were a part of your dream team?

Blume Events – Wedding Flowers

Juan from AZ Celebrity DJ

Robert's Catering – Wedding Cake

StepOnMe Photography – Photography

Babydoll Weddings – Hair and Makeup

Thank you for sharing your day with us Ashley! We had so much fun getting you and your bridesmaids ready!

<input type="text"/>	Search
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M	T	W	T	F	S	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

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I love your feedback!

Mrs. Claus performs weddings too



Monday, June 29, 2020

FAQ'S - WHAT DO I OFFER AND HOW?



I want to add this...

Being an "ordained minister"/Wedding Officiant who does same sex weddings as well as traditional I find myself under fire a lot... This morning I had someone (another minister) ask me to define my ministry.

This was my reply:

I am non-denominational. I do not judge nor do I discriminate against others, including you, and appreciate when others do not judge and discriminate against me, including you (not that I'm saying by you asking you are judging). I feel all people have the right to believe as they will so long as it does not hurt others. I was ordained online to perform my sons wedding several years ago. I've taken my paperwork down to the courthouse to insure my ordination was legal so that I could do my son's wedding legally. It is. Since then I have performed over 400 wedding ceremonies. There is a need out there for wedding officiants/ordained ministers such as myself do to the fact that there are so many out there who will not perform ceremonies for people who are deeply and truly in love due to their personal beliefs. That is why I am here and why I do what I do. May your God bless and protect you as I know mine will me.

AMM NOR 00556

Blog Archive

▼ [2020](#) (1)▼ [June](#) (1)[FAQ'S - WHAT
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About Me

**Karen C**[View my
complete profile](#)

Hello! My name is Karen and I am a non-denominational Ordained Minister ordained online through Christian Harvest Church. I will not make you attend any churches or any pre-marriage counseling before I will perform your ceremony. I would love to be a part of your special day, even on a last minute basis (if you decide to elope or if your minister backs out) if I am available! I work in Boise, Meridian, Nampa, Caldwell and the surrounding areas. I prefer not to drive more than 90 minutes away, however I might be able to work something out with you.

What do I do?

1. **Weddings** - You must get your license. I will do your ceremony how you want it done. Do you want me to just say "I now pronounce you man and wife" (or wife and wife or husband and husband) - fine! That is all that is required by law besides me filling out and mailing in your certificate, so whatever I do or say before that is up to you! Do you want prayers and scriptures? OK and if not, that is OK too! This is your special day not mine. I'm just happy to be a part of it. I do have a wedding packet that I use to help you build the ceremony you desire - or you can bring something you have fallen in love with and I will use it. I can do sand, candle or knot tying ceremonies as well. I have several different options available for these.

2. Renewal of Marriage Ceremony (or renewal of vows).

Were you married by a JP and want to have a nice ceremony now? Do you want to recommit? Great! It is a wonderful way to refresh and rejuvenate your marriage. I will do everything I do for a legal ceremony (minus the legal paperwork).

3. Affirmation of Love Ceremony (COMMITMENT CEREMONY).

This is not a legal ceremony, however it is one that is recognized by you, your partner, and your God. I recognize that people have different needs. There are many reasons why two people may be unable to marry legally; sometimes for financial or social reasons beyond your control. This is a way for a couple to commit to each other and to bond together in a way only those in love can do, to share their dreams and cares and journey through life together as partners in life. I will do everything I do for a legal ceremony (minus the legal paperwork).

Most commonly asked questions**Why did I get ordained and how do I know if my ordination is legal if I did it online?**

My son was getting married and we weren't sure if we were going to have someone available to perform the wedding. Just in

AMM NOR 00557

case I went online and got ordained. If you are wondering if my ordination is legal in Idaho - so was I...I went into the Vital Statistics office to find out exactly what is required to legally perform a wedding. Because my ordination allows me to do weddings, funerals, and baptisms it is legal in the state of Idaho. FYI, it is also legal in Oregon.

How many weddings have you performed?

I have performed well over 400 weddings.

How much do I charge?

I work on a base fee then donations after that. Like the courthouse, I only accept cash payments. If you require a receipt please let me know in advance. My fees START at \$50 for a basic signing. If I am meeting with you more than one time figure a minimum of \$50 each time we meet. After that I work on donations, I then tell my couples to pay me what they can HONESTLY afford.

What do you wear for the wedding?

I wear dress suits. I try to look my most professional at the actual wedding, unless you tell me otherwise. I don't usually dress up for the rehearsal or when I meet with you to discuss your ceremony.

What do you do at the rehearsal?

This depends on if you have a wedding planner or not. If you do not have a wedding planner I will help you organize who goes where and when. Do you want the groom to start out with me or walk his mom and the bride's mom down the aisle first? Do you want the groomsmen to stand down with the groom or walk the bridesmaids down? Etc...

How do I feel about pictures being taken at the wedding?

First, I feel like the photographer is one of the most important people at your wedding. When you are old and have lost all your memories, your pictures will be all that you have. I tell the photographers to stand wherever they can to get the best pictures! I don't even care if they are standing behind me with a lens on my shoulder.

Do you mind wearing or holding a microphone?

Not at all. Mike me up! I do tend to have a voice that carries. I'm a stage actress, therefore my voice carries! However, I also understand that a mike can and will help.

Do you offer any other services?

Yes! Aside from being a wedding officiant, I'm also a professional Mrs. Claus. I've been a Claus longer than I've been an officiant, starting out on the Thunder Mountain Railroad. I'm currently associated with the Idaho Real Bearded Santas. Feel

free to check out my Mrs. Claus blog [HERE](#).

Call, text, or email me today to schedule your special day with me! I still have Several dates available.

Karen Christensen
Ordained Minister/Wedding Officiant
208-371-8198

Posted by [Karen C](#) at [3:00 PM](#) No comments:

Sunday, June 2, 2019

Feedback from others

Would you like to leave me some positive feedback for other people to read? I'd appreciate it as well!

Posted by [Karen C](#) at [2:46 PM](#) 4 comments:

Friday, June 3, 2016

My Wedding Wire Feedback

Read Our Reviews

from past clients

24 reviews

5.0/5.0

We were looking for a simple wedding at home, just the two of us widowers. Karen was very interested in our story and made our day very... [read full review](#)

5.0/5.0

Karen is Nice, Professional, Knowledgeable, and Sweet. I contacted her as my fiance' and I wanted to get married right away. She made... [read full review](#)

5.0/5.0

Karen responded immediately and was able to accommodate us on very short notice. Her website is informative and allows for all... [read full review](#)

Read all 24 Reviews at



Posted by [Karen C](#) at [7:12 AM](#) 1 comment:

Sunday, September 7, 2014

Themed Weddings? Yes please!

One thing that some people would never think to do is to have a themed wedding. I've done the "Princess Bride" wedding "Space Balls" wedding and the "Robin Hood, Men In Tights" wedding. Most recently I had the happy and fun experience of doing a Pirate Themed wedding!! Not just the wedding party, but the guest also showed up in Pirate garb. Can you say Arr? Arrr!





Themed weddings I've done in the past (other than the pirate wedding):

**Spaceballs, The Princess Bride, Firefly/Serenity/Starwars,
Wild West, Harry Potter & Pokemon**

Just a thought! ;)

Posted by [Karen C](#) at [1:41 PM](#) [2 comments:](#)

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The “Un”-official Officiant

(<http://www.amazingdaysevents.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/San-Ysidro-Ranch-wedding-by-Jen-Rodriguez-69.jpg>) It is **beyond** popular right now to ask an uncle or a dear friend to officiate your wedding. Which is SO special and intimate. What a great honor for them... and a HUGE responsibility. There are a million articles out there about how to ask that person to do it, how to get ordained, what the flow of the ceremony should be, what words to choose, etc. It's mind-boggling. I am a tried-and-true believer that you should hire PROFESSIONALS to work at your wedding instead of relying on a family members & friends – they are, after all, special enough to be on the A-List that made the cut to be invited to the Big Day, right? However, this is one role that I totally “get” as being an exception to the rule. However, that person needs to:



Be an experienced public speaker

- Enjoy being in front of a group
- Be willing to give up sitting and enjoying the ceremony because s/he'll be in the middle of it
- Take the role seriously (this is NOT the time to be a jokster. Humor is good but isn't an opportunity to roast the Bride & Groom)
- Research this role and what s/he wants to say
- Be prepared (meet with the couple, practice, etc.)

If all of the above apply, then I say "Go For It!" As a wedding coordinator, I am asked all the time, **"What should I say?"** so here is my feedback. Every ceremony is different so I don't have any templates/outlines. I found this outline (<http://www.officiantsforyourwedding.com/tag/wedding-ceremony-flow/>) online and like it (keep or toss whatever you want) because it's simple. And some words I like included, for logistical reasons are: "Please rise for the Bride" (this is said 3-4 beats after the music changes to "her song" immediately before the Bride comes out) – the role of the officiant is to LEAD the ceremony so telling guests what to do is par for the course. S/he will then say something like "Who presents this woman in marriage?" (her dad will say something like "her mother and I" or "our family"...). Then the Groom will come to whoever's escorting the Bride down the aisle and shakes hands and/or hug. Personal preference: I LOVE it when both parents escort the Bride down the aisle. We live in an era when the parents are true co-parents and the mom (or mother-figure) is just as important to honor as the father (or father-figure) as a source of love, support and honor in the family. The Groom then takes the Bride's hand and they will walk toward the officiant, face each other and hold hands (she hands off her bouquet). Officiant says: "You may be seated" or "Please be seated" – again, LEAD the group! I HIGHLY suggest that the Bride & Groom do traditional AND personal vows. People love the humor and love that come from the personal vows but really feel comfortable when they get to hear the traditional vows as well ("...in good times and bad...") When/if doing traditional vows, please close with "forever and always" instead of "till death do us part." No one wants to hear about death during such a joyous occasion! After some closing comments about how the Bride & Groom have just made promises to each other, the officiant can say something like something like, "I now pronounce you husband and wife." Then **TAKES A STEP TO THE LEFT OR RIGHT SO S/HE'S NOT IN THE PHOTO WHEN YOU KISS.** (To be practiced during the rehearsal). "<Groom>, you may kiss your Bride...". They kiss. Then they turn to the guests (to be practiced at rehearsal), then everyone will clap loudly so wait for that to die down a bit before saying something like, "Ladies and gentlemen, I am proud to present to you, for the first time as husband and wife, Mr. and Mrs. <I like the formal version with both names mentioned and the legal last name>." and then everyone will clap even louder as they walk back up the aisle. Since your officiant will be in 90% of your ceremony photos, it's important for him/her to be dressed neutrally and professionally. I suggest a base color like grey or tan or black (only for more formal events) with a neutral tie or scarf. Minimal jewelry, comfortable shoes (I'm talking to you, ladies), and no/minimal patterns. It's ideal that the officiant have a black/grey hard folio of some sort that is neutral & professional-looking to hold the papers that s/he'll be reading from. You can get one at the local office supply store. NOTE: A nice, leather folio could be a wonderful gift for your officiant – maybe monogram it? NOTE: If you decide that you want to hire a professional after all, I HIGHLY recommend Rich Tobin of Wed In SB (www.wedinsb.com/). He's professional and organized and his ceremonies are personalized, heartfelt and beautifully delivered.

This entry was posted in Uncategorized (<http://www.amazingdaysevents.com/category/uncategorized>) on July 22, 2013
[<http://www.amazingdaysevents.com/the-unofficial-officiant>] by Sophie (<http://www.amazingdaysevents.com/author/sophie>).



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BRIDES HELPING BRIDES ™

POST NEW TOPIC

Wedding Forums (/wedding-forum/) > Brides Helping Brides ™ (/wedding-forum/brides-helping-brides-trade-1-1.html) > Flowers Cost?? Officiant cost???

Flowers Cost?? Officiant cost???**JNB818** (<https://www.liweddings.com/profile/JNB818>)*Posted: Jun 19, 2011 11:33 AM***Flowers Cost?? Officiant cost???**

Hi everyone

I am new to this, but my wedding planning has just begun and everything just seem soooo pricey. I spoke to an officiant and he quoted me \$550.00 for a half hour ceremony...is that the average price?

I am meeting with a few florist next week, just wanted to know the average price for flowers, I know this can really vary.

[Reply](#) | [Quote](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Report](#)**NYtherapist** (<https://www.liweddings.com/profile/NYtherapist>)*Posted: Jun 19, 2011 11:48 AM***Re: Flowers Cost?? Officiant cost???**

We're having an interfaith ceremony. Our Rabbi is \$600 and our Priest is \$750. Based upon that, the \$550 sounds right to me.

Flower cost will depend upon the flowers.

[Reply](#) | [Quote](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Report](#)**JNB818** (<https://www.liweddings.com/profile/JNB818>)*Posted: Jun 19, 2011 11:58 AM***Re: Flowers Cost?? Officiant cost???**

Thanks for the feedback, for some reason I thought the average price was around 300...but by what you are saying I guess \$500 is not so bad.

Regarding flowers a friend told me I can look to spend around 1,000 to 2,000 🙄

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NYtherapist (<https://www.liweddings.com/profile/NYtherapist>) *Posted: Jun 19, 2011 12:04 PM* **Re: Flowers Cost?? Official cost???**

Officiants who are not affiliated with religious organizations may charge less. I never looked at them, so I don't know. If we weren't using officiants connected to our faiths, we would have had a friend or family member get ordained online (that's what most of the ones who advertise on here did). There are lots of LIW brides using the officiants who advertise here, so they may be more helpful in terms of what you should expect to pay.

1-2k for flowers is about right. Costs vary quite a bit. Make sure you see local florists and not just the wedding florists who are popular here. Local florists charge significantly less most of the time.

[Reply](#) | [Quote](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Report](#)**IrishAli** (<https://www.liweddings.com/profile/IrishAli>)*Posted: Jun 19, 2011 12:17 PM***Re: Flowers Cost?? Official cost???**

For flowers, it depends what you want and how many

Hgh or low centerpieces? 10 or 20 centerpieces?

Ours is around \$1100, but we have 11 tables and no bridal party (other than MOH and BM)

[Reply](#) | [Quote](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Report](#)**StephanieJoy** (<https://www.liweddings.com/profile/StephanieJoy>)*Posted: Jun 19, 2011 02:13 PM***Re: Flowers Cost?? Official cost???**

i am paying about t 1500 my officiants but we are having a cantor and a preist for an interfaith ceromony

[Reply](#) | [Quote](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Report](#)**Futuremrsmason** (<https://www.liweddings.com/profile/Futuremrsmason>)*Posted: Jun 19, 2011 04:19 PM***Re: Flowers Cost?? Official cost???**

Posted by heidijames

Hi everyone

I am new to this, but my wedding planning has just begun and everything just seem soooo pricey. I spoke to an officiant and he quoted me \$550.00 for a half hour ceremony...is that the average price?

I am meeting with a few florist next week, just wanted to know the average price for flowers, I know this can really vary.

We are paying \$500 for our Reverend. As far as flowers for 12 tables, 1 MOH, 4 bridesmaids, 1 best man, 4 groomsmen, my bouquet, and other corsages we have gotten quotes between 1000-2000.

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b2b2013 (<https://www.liweddings.com/profile/b2b2013>)

Posted: Jun 19, 2011 04:50 PM



Re: Flowers Cost?? Officiant cost???

Holy Crap!!! Officiants cost a lot!! Guess I'm lucky my uncle is a priest- I only have to make a \$100 'donation' to the church

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rm0212 (<https://www.liweddings.com/profile/rm0212>)

Posted: Jun 19, 2011 11:44 PM



Re: Flowers Cost?? Officiant cost???

Posted by b2b2013

Holy Crap!!! Officiants cost a lot!! Guess I'm lucky my uncle is a priest- I only have to make a \$100 'donation' to the church

wow you lucked out, were just having a ceremony and our min donaton is \$500

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pixietina (<https://www.liweddings.com/profile/pixietina>)

Posted: Jun 20, 2011 01:21 AM



Re: Flowers Cost?? Officiant cost???

I am paying 475 for officiant.

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JNB818 (<https://www.liweddings.com/profile/JNB818>)

Posted: Jun 20, 2011 12:28 PM



Re: Flowers Cost?? Officiant cost???

Has anyone ever heard of Kim Kirkley, she has very good reviews on wedding wire. I need to know the fees but they refuse to let me know unless I come in to meet in person but if its not in my price range I would hate to waste my time lol

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b2b2013 (<https://www.liweddings.com/profile/b2b2013>)

Posted: Jun 20, 2011 12:33 PM



Re: Flowers Cost?? Officiant cost???

Posted by rm0212

Posted by b2b2013

Holy Crap!!! Officiants cost a lot!! Guess I'm lucky my uncle is a priest- I only have to make a \$100 'donation' to the church

wow you lucked out, were just having a ceremony and our min donaton is \$500

Thankfully the priest from the church we are using is very good friends with my uncle as well!! Geeze, I couldn't imagine spending that much for the church or an officiant!!

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(https://www.liweddings.com/wedding-forum/brides-helping-brides-trade/flowers-cost-officiant-cost-777894-1.html)



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Welcome New Vendors



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(/vendors/financial-planning-long-island/primerica-nelida-flynn)

In 1977, we were fou...



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Eastern Bays Company...



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The Miller Place Inn...



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Elegant and Pictures...



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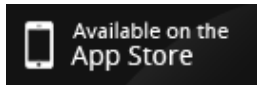
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71



Sing it! "Here comes the
McBride, all dressed in white"

(**Note:** Be forewarned that this was a post that was written very late at night many years ago... the puns are ridiculous. Slaphappy would be an accurate way to describe the mood that night. You've been warned. If you don't think you can handle it, save yourself now.)

Why get married under one, plain ol' white arch when you can tie the knot under TWO golden arches? No brainer, really. Free wi-fi and a scary clown? Come on! This is a dream (nightmare?) wedding if we've ever seen one.

In 2010, **Hong Kong** **McDonald's** franchises began offering a McDonald's McWedding package to couples for as little as \$400. Ummm, was there a demand for this that showed up in some marketing

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report? Were they turning
brides and grooms away before?

A McDonald's
Hong Kong
spokesperson
says:
"Over the past
two years, we've
started receiving
calls from
people who
want to have a
wedding party
in our
restaurants.
There are about
10 calls a
month. People
said they'd
dated here, or
met here, and
wanted to get
married here.
We see this as a
business
opportunity."

However this idea came about,
it's apparently gaining traction.
The press, as you can probably
imagine, grabbed onto this story

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and ran with it. Brides and grooms? They're "lovin' it", of course...sorry, couldn't resist.

In all seriousness, there is a worldwide trend happening with regards to retail and low-cost weddings. Naturally, the economy has a lot to do with this new trend, but also many brides and grooms are looking for something quirky and non-traditional...apparently. We've seen articles online about weddings being held at the 99 Cent Store, Home Depot, White Castle and other odd locations, but for a fast food joint to actually have wedding packages and decorations is a new one to us.

Why McNuptials?

We came up with a list of good reasons to have a McDonald's McWedding:

McBathrooms!

What bride-to-be wouldn't want to get her makeup and hair done with her bridesmaids in one of those spacious and luxurious

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McDonald's bathrooms? Just be careful that your wedding dress train doesn't include a trail of toilet paper. You're welcome.

Cut The McApple Pie

It'd be way easier to cut the apple pie and probably less messy than a traditional frosted wedding cake. No worry about getting your makeup smeared with creme frosting or fondent.

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McNuggett Appetizers

Just think of the selection of dipping sauces for your guests!

McSalads

Forget having a "traditional" salad bar. Stack those McSalads and your guests will get right through that buffet line! Maybe you could get them to bring back those McShaker salads! Just picture the crazy-cool conga line you could have with everyone shaking their McShakers!

McWinter Wonderland

If you are having a December wedding, you just might be

able to have egg nog
McFlurries!

McCafé Drinks

Your guests will be hopped up
on McCafé drinks – they'll be
cheering even louder!

McOfficiant

Can you think of a better
officiant for your McDonald's
McWedding ceremony than
Mayor McCheese? We can't,
either. We were originally
thinking Ronald would do the
ceremony, but we're pretty
sure he's not ordained.

McHoneymoon

If the Hong Kong McDonald's
allows the bride and groom to
spend the wedding night in in
the McDonald's Playland, we're
not sure how anyone could
turn it down, really. We
couldn't.

Awww, they're doing the "Lady
and the Tramp" thing...with a
French fry!

Yes, those are McApple Pies.
Food fight!!

Throwing McRice?

Here's a list of possible
McDrawbacks of having your
wedding at McDonald's:

McRice?

We do have to wonder if the
McDonald's in Hong Kong will
be offering McRice to throw at
the newlyweds. Seems
appropriate considering it's in
Hong Kong...plus throwing
fries might hurt AND no one
wants to waste fries...and you
KNOW your cousin's kids
would be picking the fries up

off the ground and eating them.

No McChampagne

Alas, there is no alcohol at a McWedding. Hong Kong law forbids serving alcohol at a family eating establishment. Of course, depending on your family, this item could very well be placed under the positive list above. Not to mention that the potential for Ronald McDonald to get plastered and then give you a sloppy drunk wedding toast is reason enough to be happy about having a "dry" wedding.

McSecurity

Remember, this is McDonald's Hong Kong. Make sure there is some McSecurity included in your wedding package...you don't want the Hamburglar to turn into the Brideburglar.

Fry Guy

You may want to inquire as to who the wedding coordinator representative at McDonald's will be. You don't want to end up with a pimple-faced teenager who was just working the French fry station.

Besides, he may smell
delicious and that would be
distracting during the
ceremony. Think about it.

McCoin Purse

We have to wonder, would the
bride do a "99¢ *McMoney*
Dance"? Seems appropriate to
us.

McBridal Party

We have to warn you about
potentially bad wedding
photos: Depending on how
goofy your wedding party
members are, there's always
the potential for them to walk
down the aisle wearing red
Ronald McDonald wigs. Just
saying.

McBoring

McDonald's cups strung off
the back of your car ("Just
McMarried"??) simply wouldn't
make enough of a racket as
you drive off to be McCool.
Right?

**Don't believe us? Click
the McButton:**

favorite things about being a Celebrant: learning a couple's unique love story and helping them to celebrate that story with the most important people in their lives.

Sometimes when first asking a couple about their story they will claim that there isn't much to tell. They are under the mistaken assumption that if there is not a lot of excitement or drama in their story, it is not of interest to others. But each time I hear a couple's story, I find there is plenty of amazement to be had in learning about how two people discovered the beautiful souls in each other. Based on hundreds of wedding ceremonies I have officiated, I would bet that most of your guests will feel the same.

There are common elements to many love stories, like the feeling that these two people can be themselves with each other, the sense of feeling at home with each other, and the joy of deciding to be together. And there are unique elements like how the couple met, first date stories, and hopes for the future.

In many cases, the more personal your wedding ceremony, the more your guests will feel like they have been given the opportunity to truly celebrate what makes your marriage uniquely yours. And isn't that what you have invited them there to do?



St. Louis Wedding Celebrant: Fall 2017

📅 November 9, 2017 👤 by ruth

A Day in the Life...of this Celebrant

So, what does a wedding officiant do all day? Isn't it just a matter of showing up and officiating? Well, I cannot speak for all officiants, but I can speak for myself and for others who are trained and certified Life-Cycle Celebrants®. Before the actual ceremony day, I have spent hours writing and re-writing the ceremony script so that it is just the way the couple wants it to be. For many couples, I have also planned and run their rehearsal, sometimes alone, and other times in coordination with an event planner.

Of course, not every ceremony day looks the same for me. Sometimes I am officiating at two weddings in one day. In that case, I do not put other things on my morning schedule. Other times I spend Saturday morning in meetings with couples whose wedding ceremonies we are only beginning to plan.

Just for fun, I listed my activities on October 28, 2017, in order to compare schedules with the bride and groom. Thanks to *Simcha's Events* for these excerpts from Hanna and Tim's Graham Chapel wedding itinerary.

Itinerary for Bride and Groom

9:45 Bride and Bridesmaids meet for hair and make-up in the bridal suite.

11:00 lunch for Bride and Bridesmaids arrives (Panera).

12:00 Flowers arrive.

12:30 Groom and Groomsmen arrive at Knight Center.

1:00 First look with Father of the Bride and Bride.

1:05 First look with Groom and Bride.

1:10 Couple photos taken.

1:30 Wedding party heads to Forest Park for pics.

3:45 Family photos at Graham Chapel.

4:30 Photos complete.

5:20 Ceremony begins.

6:30 Cocktails and Reception begins.

Itinerary for Celebrant

9:30 Ruth meets her sisters for breakfast at the London Tea Room. Runs errands.

12:00 Back home. Adds notes from yesterday evening's rehearsal to final copy of today's ceremony. Prints final copy.

12:30 Practices delivery of today's ceremony out loud.



Jaymie & Kyle,
Cody Krogman Photography

1:00 Lunch at home (leftovers – yes!)

1:45 Puts final touches on Sunday's Jewel Box wedding and prints final copy.

2:00 Practices delivery of tomorrow's ceremony out loud, with one more run through of today's.

2:30 Sends review requests to recent couples for The Knot and Wedding Wire.

3:30 Hair, make-up, get dressed.

4:10 Leaves home for Graham Chapel.

4:45 Checks in with Bride, Groom, Reader, Planner, and DJ. Mic/sound check.

5:20 Ceremony begins.

6:30 Greeted at home by hubs who has dinner ready for us to eat. Life is good!

St. Louis Wedding Celebrant: Summer 2017

📅 August 31, 2017 👤 by ruth

"Totality"

August 21, 2017, the Great American Eclipse! And I have the good fortune to live in what was referred to as the "Path of Totality." For one minute and twenty-seven seconds, give or take a few, the moon completely blocked out the sun. We were able to take off our viewing glasses and – WOW. Words cannot describe.

There are plenty of pictures. And they sort of capture it. But there was this feeling that came over me. And I just had to give a couple of full-throated "Yawps" and "Whoo-hoos" to the world.



Later that same day, I met with a couple from Chicago who had come to St. Louis for the eclipse. They wanted to get married on this auspicious day, and so we met in Lafayette Square Park for a simple, quiet and lovely ceremony. They had written their own vows. And although I do not remember everything that they said, it was clear they understood that the commitment they were making to each other was about “totality.” They are all in, 100%!

Sometimes people wonder: Why have a marriage *ritual*? Because even the *best of words* are not enough to express *totality*.

St. Louis Wedding Celebrant: Spring 2017

📅 May 11, 2017 👤 by ruth

500 Weddings

Amazing. Since becoming a Celebrant in 2007, I have now officiated at five hundred wedding ceremonies!

Have I become cynical or jaded? No, absolutely not, because I keep my focus on the unique qualities and the true beauty of each couple whose love and best intentions have led them to a decision to marry. Whether the ceremony takes place in a park, a chapel, the couple’s backyard, or the hottest wedding venue in town, it does not matter to me. The wedding ceremony is always about celebrating the commitment to love each other as spouses for “as long as we both shall live.”

So, from Paula and Tom, the first couple to take a chance on me as a novice Celebrant, to Patrice and Melvin, who have just asked me to officiate at their elopement later this month: Thank you, one and all, for trusting me with your marriage ceremony, the heart of your wedding day!



St. Louis Wedding Celebrant: Winter 2017

📅 March 2, 2017 👤 by ruth

Unity Rituals

One of the ways a couple can put their own unique stamp on their wedding ceremony is to perform a meaningful unity ritual. So, what is a unity ritual? At a wedding, it is a symbolic movement or set of movements which expresses the unity of the couple. The most common unity rituals seen at American weddings include the exchange of marriage vows, the giving of wedding rings, and the first kiss as a married couple.

Other cultures and religious practices have unity rituals which are included in a wedding ceremony, some of which we are seeing more of here in the United States when people bring their treasured traditions with them as they emigrate. Some of these include the lasso ceremony, circling rituals, hand washing, or a garland ceremony.

Some of the unity rituals you may be more familiar with include lighting a unity candle, blending sand, Celtic hand fasting, or tree planting. Some unity rituals can be created or adapted to include children, if the couple is bringing children into the marriage.

So how do you decide what, if any, additional unity rituals to have at your wedding ceremony? And I say “additional” unity rituals because most people will have already decided to include marriage vows, wedding rings, and the first kiss. And for some couples, those traditional unity rituals are enough.

But if you think that you would like to explore other possibilities, ask yourselves if you want to say something more, express another aspect of your commitment to each other, or feature something about your relationship as a couple to the wider community. If you are easily creative, you may come up with an original idea. However, most of us need help coming up with ideas, so rest assured that there are plenty of options posted on Pinterest, WeddingWire, and The Knot every day.

As a couple who enjoy exploring new craft beer together, Sue and Eric knew that they wanted to share a glass of beer for their unity ritual (see photo). Sometimes it can be that simple!

An experienced wedding officiant should be able to discuss options with you to help find just the right unity ritual to enhance your marriage celebration. Contact me to talk about your wedding ceremony today!



St. Louis Wedding Celebrant: Fall 2016

📅 November 19, 2016 👤 by ruth

"Off Season" Weddings

My husband and I were sitting with our coffee over a leisurely breakfast this morning. About half way into it, he looked at me in disbelief. "What? No weddings today?" As I look back at my 2016 calendar, the last Saturday I was not officiating at a wedding, attending a family wedding, or out of town for travel was April 16. Yep, my 2016 "wedding season" is over. This does not mean that I will not be officiating at any more weddings this year. There are still a few more on my calendar. But it does mean that the pace has slowed down dramatically!

For most couples planning a wedding, "wedding season" is a new expression. I know it was for me, before I began officiating. It did not occur to me that there might be some times of the year that are more likely to interest couples than others. I had assumed that June would be my busiest month. It's not! But I have learned that, at least in the St. Louis area, many couples are leaning more and more toward Spring and Fall for their ceremonies.

Off course, the process of deciding when to have a wedding is distinct for each couple. Whether your determining factors include getting some great outdoor photos, your favorite time of year, the travel needs of family, the availability of your preferred venue, astrological data, or any other considerations, you may be more or less tied to having your ceremony at a particular time.

However, if you are *not* tied to a particular date and time, and if you would like *more options* for just about everything (from flowers to DJs to *Officiants*), you may want to look at some off season dates. Off season in the St. Louis area tends to run from November through March, with a few variations, depending on the wedding vendor. Since fewer people get married during these months, more of the excellent wedding professionals whom you may want for your wedding day are likely to be available.

So, make any season *your* wedding season! Text, email, or call me to see if I am available for your date. If it is November through March, chances are pretty good that I am!



Lauren and Tom, at their "off season" wedding ceremony, November 5, 2016, at Silver Oaks Chateau.

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ABOUT RUTH

I am a professional and experienced wedding Celebrant working in and around the St Louis area. Your wedding ceremony should be a reflection of your love, your beliefs, your hopes and dreams for a life together and I am ready to work with you to make your ceremony personal, unique, and beautiful.

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Wedding Officiant – Danielle Baker {vendor spotlight}_|_weddings

18
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There are many reasons that I love being a wedding photographer and one of them is that I get to meet so many amazing people. Not only do I meet people in love who are planning one of the most important days of their lives, but their families and friends as well. But not all of those I meet are my clients. Vendor connections play a big part in my business. I enjoy getting to know the various vendors who also play such an important role in the same clients that I grow to know over a period of time. Danielle Baker is one of them and I am thrilled to be able to share a bit about what she is passionate about.



Tell me a little about your business:

I am one of the most experienced Wedding Officiants in the area as well as An Ordained Non- Denominational Minister and a Notary Public for South Carolina. I absolutely LOVE what I do. Intelligent, professional, poised, funny and appropriately reverent, My mission is to help couples marry in a very easy, genuine and approachable atmosphere. I have had the honor of marrying couples at numerous venues in the Upstate, Charleston, Columbia, Rock Hill, Asheville, Hartwell, GA and Lake Lure, NC. In that time I have written and officiated well over 400 wedding ceremonies beginning in 2009. I am proud to say that with over 400 couples married, all but 12 couples that I have married since 2009 are still together! Every wedding performed is custom written and always unique!

Award Winning Officiant- The Knot Best of Wedding Winner for 2014, WeddingWire's Couples Choice Winner for 2014, Bride's Choice Winner for 2013, WeddingWire Rated 2012, 2011, 2010!

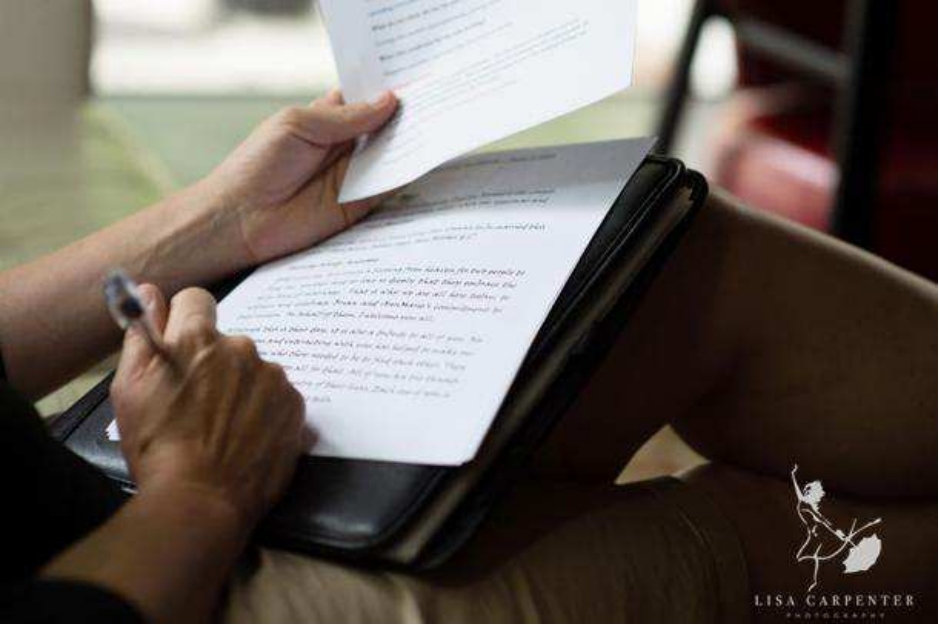
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How did you come about being a wedding officiant?

I began officiating weddings as a notary public in 2009. I would perform nuptials by request and primarily worked by references of friends. In 2009, I made the choice to make it a go full time. I decided that if I was going to be praying with couples, giving advice and blessing the marriages that I was officiating, I would need to study marriage and get ordained. In 2010, I became an Ordained Non- Denominational Christian Minister. In 2012, I became a trained facilitator for Prepare- Enrich Relationship Building (Pre- Marriage Counseling).





Are there benefits to having custom vows?

Every couple has a unique love story to tell. In writing custom ceremonies for each couple I marry, it allows me to craft a ceremony that will only fit their relationship! They can be as traditional or non-traditional as they want it to be. I perform religious and non-religious ceremonies for all faiths and work with you to create a wedding ceremony that will incorporate their beliefs, hopes, and dreams and bring what is in their hearts to the forefront. Most importantly, I do not judge any of my couples. I do respect their need for privacy and I am still able to establish a personal relationship with many couples that will last a lifetime. It is my job to connect and get to know my couples, so I can help create their dream day!



How do you get to know your clients?

I meet with my couples in person, via phone, Skype and also converse with them via text and facebook. By the time I go to write, I have bonded and become friends with most of my couples. I then send them a questionnaire and write their ceremony from all of the information I have compiled. My couples approve the ceremonies before their wedding day.



Do you feel that guests attending wedding ceremonies can connect better to the bride & groom on their wedding day by hearing personalized vows?

100% I hear often from guests and my couples that the ceremony is the best wedding that they have ever been to. I see a lot of laughter and tears during the ceremonies. It warms my heart!

What makes you laugh?

Practical jokes, positive humor, funny pet videos, people acting goofy, funny people. I love to laugh!



Do you have a funny story to share?

I recently had a couple that really loved the movie “The Princess Bride”. They asked me to write into their ceremony these lines from the movie “Good afternoon. Marriage is what brings us together today. Marriage that is a blessed arrangement, that dreams within a dream.

If you have ever see the movie, the Priest talks with a lisp/ accent. I told them there was NO WAY I could do the whole thing the way he did in front of 200 guests, but I would do the something with the beginning. They were so happy. During the ceremony, I began with “Mawwage” and the cleared my throat and said “I am sorry” and then began in my normal voice and continues the ceremony. Everyone giggled and laughed and loved it, but most of all my couple was over the moon! Here is the link so you can understand: Click [here](#).



Is there anything else you would like to add?

I am a military wife, married to an amazing man in the (USAF) SC Air National Guard. A mother to our wonderful son Gunnar (age 16) and a mom to 4 of the sweetest rescue dogs ever. I am a friend to many, a daughter, a sister and a proud Hospice Volunteer. I love life, I love God and I feel blessed on a daily basis!

Thank you Danielle! I really enjoyed getting to know you even more. Please be sure to check out Danielle’s [website](#) and contact her with any questions 😊

~lisa

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[...] sure to visit Lisa’s blog for more on Danielle! And check out this previous post with some fun facts about Ms. Baker that I [...]

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Bridal Salons

Beauty

DJs

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Florists

Wedding Planners

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Find A Couple's Wedding Website

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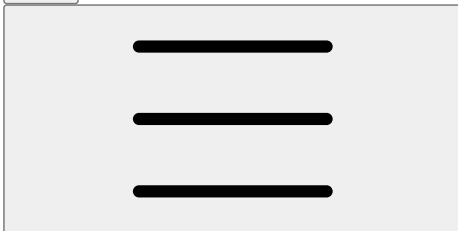
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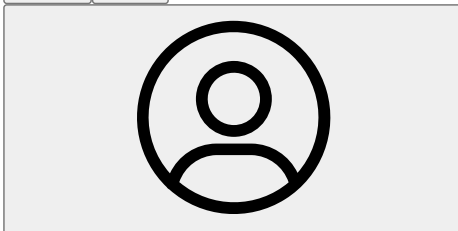
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November 2014 Weddings

NEW DISCUSSION

Finding an Officiant?



April192002
member




June 2014

How are you finding yours? I've looked at TK and other wedding websites but not finding the perfect person. The Google searches I've been doing are bringing up the same handful of people. My local board has a post with vendors used but all of the officiants are the ones that keep coming up, and I'm not totally in love with any of them. Maybe we're just being too picky wanting a male who's older than us that has little to no accent.


Report

REPLY TO POST

Re: Finding an Officiant?



hikebikebemerry
member



June 2014


Are you looking for someone affiliated with a specific religion or a JOP?

We went to the county that we were getting married and found a JOP who is also a Unitarian Minister.




Report

Reply



goldchocobo.defunct635829490514903826
member

I'm Canadian, eh!



June 2014


My FI found a lovely lady online that was perfect for us. I find that wedding shows have officiants and friends also have advice to give. Sometimes asking the people you know at work or school can dig up a lead or two. Wedding wire might have something as well.

I'm curious about the accent thing. Are you afraid of not understanding the officiant if they have a thick accent? I'm intrigued, April lol.




Report

Reply



April192002
member



June 2014

We're not looking specifically for a religion, most of the "basic" wordings work well for us - the mention of God will be in our ceremony at some point. I've looked on other wedding websites and have found a lot of the same people as I have on here, and the few I have tried contacting haven't responded (it's been a few weeks). I've asked some friends but no co-workers yet (they're all 18-20 and unmarried, but I know that doesn't mean they can't have a lead). My sister suggested a somewhat mutual friend of ours but

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but aren't looking for a sermon. I just wish FI knew how complicated/stressful this has become for me, but all it would take is another email to figure out the answers.

I do have to say that the secretary was a little - meh! In my original email I signed my name and phone number, in case they needed to call instead of email. She responded that he is available, it's \$200, she needs a contact number and the groom's name, and she'll put us on the calendar. Ummm...didn't I already give you my phone number? Whatever! I gave her my phone number again but in the body of the email. I'm surprised that she didn't ask me the location, which I also put in the original email - and that makes me wonder if she actually understands that I want him to come to our venue (but it's on a Saturday right after Thanksgiving so the courts would normally be closed).

Report

Reply



goldchocobo.def
unct63582949051
4903826

I'm Canadian, eh!
member



July 2014

Maybe a lot of people reach out to this secretary for quickie type weddings and she's used to the whole "Yup, sign here, it's 200 bucks and he'll show up at this time. NEXT!" Maybe it is easier to call her with questions?

Don't be stressed out 😞 You are that much closer to getting your officiant!

Our officiant will not be staying. You do not have you feed your officiant. They typically leave after the ceremony so they can mail your paperwork.



Report

Reply

This discussion has been closed.

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FI doesn't really like the idea of a friend doing it. I didn't think about going to a wedding show to possibly find someone, and I didn't think it would be so hard to find someone in the big city that I live in. @hikebikebemerry Did you just walk into the county courthouse and ask about JOPs? How exactly does that work? @goldchocobo I live in TX so there are a lot of different kinds of thick accents. It's more for everyone being able to understand them because my family and I are from CA, so we "don't have accents." I've had a lot of people ask me where I'm from because of the "lack of accent," even though I moved here when I was 4.

Report

Reply

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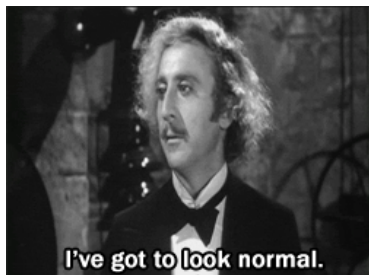


hikebikebemerry
member



June 2014

Nope, we went on the county's website. (We are getting marrieds about 2.5 hours from where we live.)



Report

Reply



KLee17
member



July 2014

@April192002 if you're having a hard time finding someone you like, what about asking a close friend or family member to get ordained and perform the ceremony? It would be a very memorable service and a great way to honor someone close to you.

Report

Reply



April192002
member



July 2014

@KLee17 FI is totally against that for some crazy, odd reason. Actually, we don't really have a close friend or family member who'd we be totally thrilled to perform the ceremony. I keep talking about cost and mentioning my dad, and he's actually not 100% opposed to that anymore (down to about 90%), but he wants to keep looking. Most of the time he's just says whatever or you decide...why can't he just be like that about my dad! 😊

Report

Reply



April192002
member




July 2014

I *finally* emailed the JOP for the district of the city that we will be getting married in and found out he's available and it's only \$200. Since FI has said over and over that he would feel a little weird having my dad perform the ceremony I figured we should hire someone. I exchanged a few emails with the secretary and don't have much information. All I know is that this JOP is available and the cost. When do I have to pay? Do we have to provide our own vows or does he provide them (we don't want to write our own)? Do we ever meet/talk to him prior so we know what to expect the day of? When do I need to let them know the exact time of our ceremony? How early will he arrive? Does he take attire requests (I don't expect anything crazy - just a suit and tie and I prefer it to be in black or gray but who really cares)? Do I need to feed him or does just jet after the ceremony? I hate not knowing!

We both believe in God, though neither of us are active in a church, and are Protestant (I was born and raised Southern Baptist and he's fond of Catholic & Methodist) so we believe that God should be mentioned somewhere at some point in the vows/ceremony,


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Finding an Officiant? — The Knot Community

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INSPIRATION & TIPS

Wedding Officiants In Spokane

May 22, 2012

By Apple Brides



One of the main questions I get from Spokane/Coeur d' Alene brides is...do you know of any good officiants in the local area??? So I thought today I would do a post about the ones I've come across in my research. This is by no means a comprehensive list, so if you have someone to add be sure to let us know! There are several options when it comes to who is allowed to officiate a wedding including:

- **Justice of the Peace.** You can call the Spokane county clerks office (where you get your marriage license) and ask for a list of local Justices of the Peace who are able to perform weddings.
- **Court House.** If you'd like to get married at the [Spokane courthouse](#), you simply call and schedule an appointment and bring two witnesses. You can schedule your wedding as soon as three days after you get your marriage license.
- **Religious Ceremonies.** Obviously, if you belong to or attend a local church, you should be entitled to have the pastor or priest (or elder) conduct your marriage ceremony. Many will do weddings held outside their church building too. This should be your first call!
- **Ordained friend or relative.** If you'd like to take a more personal approach, then you might like having a friend or family member conduct your ceremony. Almost anyone can get [ordained](#), and fairly quickly too.

If none of the above options work for you, here is a (rather hodgepodge) list of some Spokane officiants who will do non-denominational/civil ceremonies and who will travel. These are just ones I've come across in my research, I'm hoping you all might have some more to add too! Ricki Zipkin. [Serendipity](#). SerendipitySpokane@gmail.com +1 509-701-8147 Ceremonial Bliss. (509) 701-6305. Gary Weber. [A Day to Remember](#). (509) 999-9677 Jake Wilson. (509) 981-9105 Lucinda

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Kay. lucinda@lucindakay.com *Personalized Ceremonies*. Barry & Jan Hobbs. (509) 928-7288 *Ralph's Regal Weddings*. (509) 599-5632 Ray Ideus. Humanist Celebrant. lorry@comcast.net or 509-464-3635.

I know there are probably a ton more, so if you know of anyone else please leave a comment!

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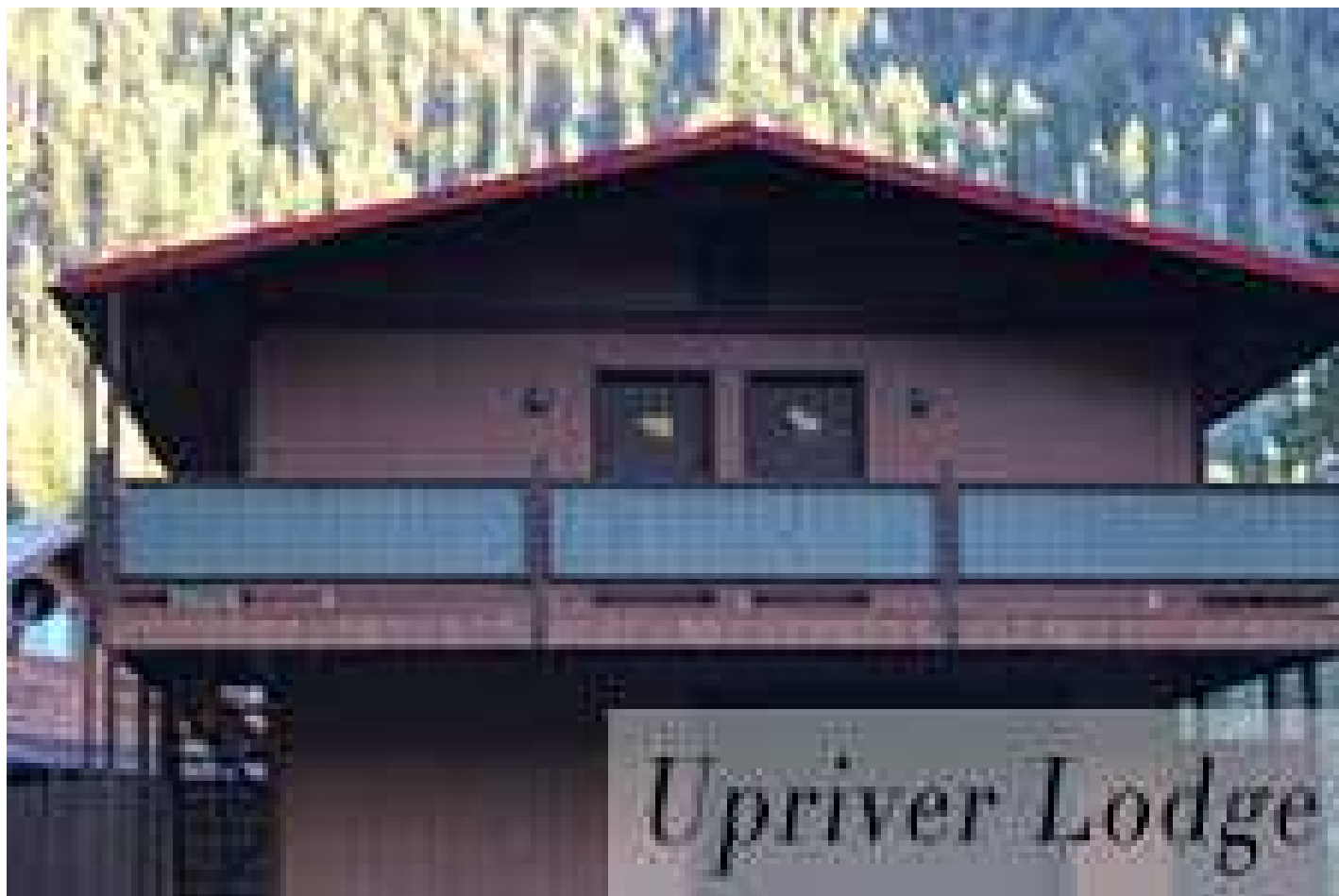
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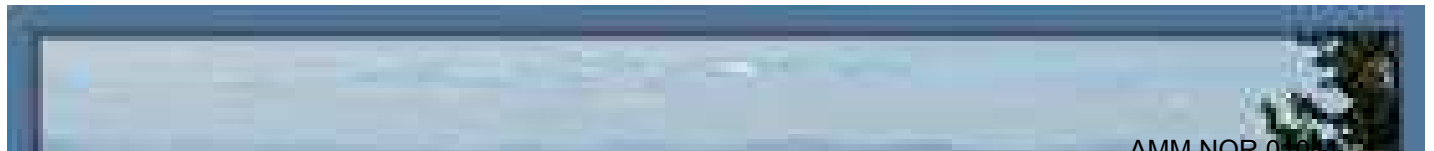


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Posted by, Lynne



on January 13, 2017

YOUR WEDDING-ON-A-SHOESTRING BUDGET GUIDE.

Wedding budgets are stressful enough.

A wedding on a shoestring budget can put a happy bride into a deep dark state of depression. Have no fear! We talked to over 50 brides who made the most out of a small-ish budget and had the time of their lives at their weddings.

Learn what they learned. Here are some tips to stretch your budget out without sacrificing what means the most to you.

1. BOOK WITH SHORT NOTICE.

Wedding venues with availability are more likely to come down on price within three months, if your date is free. If your date is not free, consider a different day if you truly love the

wedding venue. (*Wedding Shoestring Budget Guide savings: \$2,000*)

2. CONSIDER A WEEKDAY WEDDING OR A FRIDAY OR SUNDAY.

People like an excuse to take off work for a festive occasion like a wedding. The cost comes down considerably for venues, photographers, DJs and bands, florist and caterers because they want the weekday business. (*Wedding Shoestring Budget Guide savings: \$1,500*)

3. BRUNCH OR BBQ?

As far as catering, brunch weddings are less expensive and who doesn't love a brunch? Plus, there's less expectation to serve alcohol which saves you money. For evening weddings, you can consider doing a BBQ buffet and use beautiful plastic or recycled cutlery for that rustic and southern feel. (*Wedding Shoestring Budget Guide savings: \$1,750*)

4. MAKE YOUR OWN CENTERPIECES.

With so many cool artsy ideas online, if you plan ahead, you can make your own beautiful centerpieces that have a unique charm that's all your own. Some florists charge hundreds of dollars for centerpieces so you can save a lot if you make your own. [CAVEAT: Have someone else set them up for you. The last thing you need is to be running around dressing tables when you should be dressing yourself. This is a great job for a mother-in-law.] (*Wedding Shoestring Budget Guide savings: \$800*)

NEED HELP PLANNING? CONTACT US TO GET FREE ADVICE FROM OUR PLANNERS.

5. HAVE A FRIEND OFFICIATE.

Asking someone who is important to you and your future-spouse to lead the ceremony is both meaningful and budget-savvy. Your special someone will feel he or she had a significant role in your big day, and you can save money on this line item. Make sure to ask someone who is comfortable speaking in front of a crowd and a great sense of humor never hurt. They can get ordained as a minister online. (*Wedding Shoestring Budget Guide savings: \$650*)

6. USE YOUR VENUE'S ECONOMY OF SCALE.

Ask your venue to make the initial contact with their approved vendors to get you the best deal. They service dozens of weddings a year, and have relationships with vendors at rates you could never negotiate as a single event customer. Wedding planners also have relationships like these – leverage them to save you money. (*Wedding Shoestring Budget Guide savings: \$500*)

7. NEGOTIATE, NEGOTIATE, NEGOTIATE.

Everything in life is negotiable. Screw your courage to the sticking place, and tell your vendors what they can do to win your business. You are the customer and you can usually be getting a better deal. You know you got a good deal if both parties walk away feeling screwed. So get out there and negotiate a price that works for your budget. (*Wedding Shoestring Budget Guide savings: \$500*)

With these 7 steps, you just saved yourself at least **\$7,700** on your wedding. Now, let's get budgeting and see how much more you can save.

CONTACT US & BOOK A TOUR

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For 2014, 2015 and 2016, From This Day Forward LLC has received the Wedding Wire, Couples Choice Award for best officiant. This award puts us in the top 5% in the nation. We are proud of that honor and strive to achieve and maintain the level of satisfaction we have received from our clients.

Wedding Wire, Couples Choice Award

2014, 2015, 2016 & 2017


From This Day Forward LLC, selected for the **New Jersey Bride "LOVE IT" Award as Best Officiant** in New Jersey for 2012 through 2017, currently serves the New Jersey and tri-state areas. We will serve as your professional officiant and perform wedding ceremonies, baptisms, wedding vow renewals and other ceremonies. Authorized to perform ceremonies in all 50 states and civil unions in states that allow them, we will be there to guarantee you have the wedding of your dreams





Officiants





Donna Mount, Ordained Minister
Managing Member, From This Day Forward LLC
Moorestown, NJ
Tel: (609) 271-7174
E-Mail: donnamount@fromthisdayforward.net

My names is Donna Mount and I am the owner and managing member for From This Day Forward. I currently live in Moorestown, NJ with my husband Matthew and our 7 year old twin daughters Arianna and Zoe. I have been performing weddings for over ten years and have a genuine passion for what I do. I enjoy getting to know every couple we marry and being able to share in their special day.

As the former mayor of my town, one of my duties was to perform wedding ceremonies. I enjoyed doing this so much that when my term expired in 2009, I decided to get ordained and continue this joyous service.

I will help create a one of a kind ceremony that will allow the couple to combine their traditions and values in a way that is unique to them. Each wedding I perform has a personal meaning. Every couple I marry is special to me. As an officiant I am able to celebrate with the couple as they begin their life-long commitment to one another. I genuinely care about the couple I am marrying and believe that shows in my personality and my work ethics.

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Blog

Find the Perfect Officiant for Your Ceremony

Find the Perfect Officiant for Your Ceremony

Find the Perfect Officiant for Your Ceremony

Sometimes we get lost in the party planning aspect of a wedding. There's so much to cover – from choosing a venue to renting the right furniture – of course the logistics take a lot of attention. But no one in the “wedding business” wants planning to get in the way of a bride and groom enjoying their big day.

In the midst of wedding planning, it's important to remember that no matter how much fun the party is going to be, the ceremony is the reason it's all happening which is why you want to do it right and put ample amount of time into selecting the perfect person.

An officiant of a civil ceremony can be a member of a religious organization, but does not have to be. He or she is simply the person legally recognized by the state to lead and validate a wedding ceremony. Their technical legal responsibilities are quite straightforward: get ordained, get the bride and groom to exchange I do's, and file the marriage license; the details and specifications are up to you!

First things first, know the difference between a minister and officiant.

A Minister, Reverend, Pastor, Preacher, Rector, Priest etc. is an ordained professional and has the education and credentials from a specific denomination. Their credentials come from a seminary, church or ecclesiastical college. Most have had a church where they performed all the duties of a trusted spiritual leader. Along with this title comes the respect they are due for the education the experience they possess. And this translates into someone who can help you create the ceremony that is right for you. An officiant is usually someone who has completed a course of study from an online company or college in the art of performing a wedding. There are schools that train wedding officiants with very good curriculums to back up the title and these pros will do a lovely job of presiding over your wedding. This is ok if they are honest about it and tell you up front that they are not a Minister or call themselves Reverend.

How to begin...

As a wedding coordinator, I've seen thousands of ceremonies. And it pretty obvious when someone hasn't put much time or thought into who was going to perform the ceremony. They can tend to lack originality, the ceremony sounds like its scripted, and the officiant seems to have just met the couple minutes before the ceremony given there aren't any personal touches to embody who they are as individuals and together as a couple.

Below are some tips and tricks to help you find the perfect person to officiate your ceremony!

The key to finding the right person, is starting early! This way you won't feel rushed into making a last-minute decision and **you avoid running the risk of finding the right person, but they are already booked on your wedding day.** Many officiants book out far in advance so they have ample time to dig deeper into the couple's relationship and get to know them.

I suggest trying to book at least 1 year to 9 months ahead of time. This way you can take your time and interview a few so that you are 100% confident and comfortable with the person you end up choosing.

Always meet them in person. As with anything else, first impressions are everything. You will know right away if you feel comfortable with them and if their personalities match with yours! Many times, your venue will offer officiants and ministers on their vendor list AND they will offer a vendor night where you can come and meet all of them in one night! I would highly encourage you to take advantage of their list, especially if you aren't completely set on using someone already. The more options you have and the more people you talk to, the more confident you will feel when you make your decision.

Being comfortable with them is the first sign of a perfect match. You will know instantly if someone makes you feel comfortable. Keep in mind you are trusting this person with your most important and intimate 20 minutes of your life. You want to feel comfortable in their presence for the sake of your wedding day and to make the process as seamless as possible. They are going to want to spend time with you prior to the wedding day, maybe even offer some pre-marital counseling.

Might seem obvious, but make sure they are the same affiliation as you. Maybe they aren't personally practicing that religion, but many times people can do multiple types of ceremonies. Make sure they can accommodate your needs!

At the end of the day, you are technically "hiring" this person, but it is so much more than a business transaction. It is a sacred union and you are trusting this person with the most important day of your life. They should take this as seriously as you do and seem genuine about caring about giving you the BEST ceremony for you two. This means they take the time to get to know you and make it as personal as possible.

Look for someone who has a very similar personality type as you and your fiancé! This will almost guarantee that your ceremony will be everything you want it to be. The officiant should be the voice of the ceremony, but they are projecting YOUR voice.

Talk price! Discuss their cost of the ceremony and ask detailed questions such as; what is included with that? Pre-marital counseling? Do they charge extra for traveling or charge for your legal registration? What if they stay the whole time?? There are some venues, such as a yacht wedding, where the officiant stays the entire night!

Make sure your officiant can sign your license. Every state has different procedures for clergy. In New York City, for example, an officiant must be registered with the City Clerk's Office—even a justice of the peace or a judge from another town—for at least 24 hours before they can sign the license. Some religious traditions offer a spiritual ceremony but expect the couple to be legally married at the Clerk's office. Don't assume, always ask, if the officiant is fully prepared to make the ceremony legal in your state.

Read reviews online! If the person has performed multiple ceremonies, with this day in age with Yelp and the internet, chances are there are reviews of them somewhere! While not all reviews are 1000% trustworthy, it is always smart to do your research and see what others say about your potential officiant to validate your own opinion!

Go with your theme! If you are having a wedding with a theme or your venue is something other than traditional, then this might be for you! If you are okay with straying away from the traditional feel, then don't be afraid to get creative! Bring your personality into the ceremony! For example, if you are having a wedding on a yacht, have a captain officiate the wedding! It is a subtle detail that brings your theme to life and makes it seem like you paid close attention to every detail!

Where to look...

If you are looking for a minister or want something traditional, look within your own spiritual community (i.e. at church) or within your family circle. Chances are, they know you best!

As previously mentioned, use the vendor list provided by your venue! They may not know you personally right off the bat, but that can change with time. This list is usually comprised of a bunch of very experienced professionals so you can be sure to trust them with your ceremony! They will take the time to get to know you over the course of your planning process and put together a great ceremony customized to you two!

Don't be afraid to ask for what you want!

Be upfront with what you are looking for in the ceremony. If you aren't completely sure then have a simple conversation and see what their suggestions are!

Ask tons of questions!

Some commonly asked questions to ask yourself AND the potential officiant when looking:

Are there any religious or cultural rituals you'd like to include in the ceremony?

How do you feel about the word 'God'?

Do you want any songs or readings in the ceremony?

What did you like about the last wedding you attended?

What did you dislike?

Do you want the officiant to refer to a script or improvise?

Will you write your own vows?

How long do you want the ceremony?

Do you want to have a rehearsal before the wedding?

Do you want a more formal or humorous ceremony?

Will you hold a religious or secular ceremony?

Have you budgeted for a wedding officiant?

Is experience an important factor in selecting a wedding officiant?

What are your expectations of the wedding officiant?

Will you follow a traditional order of service according to your faith or create your own ceremony service?

Will your wedding venue play a role in an officiant's availability?

Will you be required to attend premarital counseling?

What happens if the officiant cancels at the last minute?

Will the officiant perform your ceremony if you are not married in his/her church?

Will your wedding day affect the availability of certain officiants?

Finally, always allow them to ask you questions. The sign of a great officiant is one that collects stories from the couple – talk to them about how they met, what they like about each other, and funny memories. He also suggests talking to the friends and family of the couple to get a sense of where they each came from.

Regardless of who you choose, a minister, officiant, family member, or the captain of the ship, you should feel comfortable with them, have a clear idea of what you want for the ceremony, be able to perform a ceremony of the same religious affiliation, and click with your personality as a couple. Go with your gut and you will be fine!

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📅 July 21, 2017

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“Marriage is the perfection of what love aimed at, ignorant of what it sought.”...

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South Jersey Officials

We are wedding officiants in southern New Jersey. Our goal is simple: Provide each couple we marry with an experience they will always remember. What's your dream wedding ceremony?

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2014

My name is Chaplain Patrick and I'm terrible at blogging.

I started this blog months and months ago. I was full of ideas. Then life and wedding season happened. So, tell me what you'd like to see in this blog. I'll do my best to make it happen.

Posted by [Chaplain Patrick](#) at 5:51 PM [No comments:](#)

TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2014

Friend or Professional?

"Dear Chaplain Patrick, I have been asked by my friend to get ordained so that I can officiate her wedding. I was wondering if you have any tips or advice? I basically have no idea what I'm doing, so I figured I'd reach out to a pro!"



Wow! Congratulation that your friend wants you to be her officiant on her wedding day. She surely has a lot of trust and confidence in you! If you're thinking of following through, I must warn you, tread lightly. Research, research and research until your blue in the face and don't agree to do it until you know for sure that this is what **you** want. Again, what you want.

Friend or Customer?

Even if you plan to move forward and not charge your friend one cent, you still need to consider her your customer. Unfortunately, friends make the worst customers. Your friend is going to have expectations that you may or may not understand. Heck, she might not understand her own expectations.

What does your customer want?

What elements are important to her? Unless you are fully prepared with options to give her, you're going to seem unprepared. Is it fair that you should learn three-hundred ceremony elements just to have a conversation with her?

Are you planning the ceremony as a wedding gift?

Chances are, you are going to have to invest many, many hours into research and

WEDDING OFFICIANTS



**IT'S NOT JUST A CEREMONY.
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It's the day that you've dreamed about for as long as you can remember. What type of ceremony will it take to make your dreams come true? Let's make that happen! We will customize a ceremony that is based on your ideas and wishes. We will always keep the focus on you. Our promise is to offer you the absolute best ceremony and attention to detail without breaking the bank. Please take a peek at our website for very detailed information about our services. We look forward to hearing from you! If you have questions, please feel free to ask! We love weddings and we're happy to help.

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BLOG ARCHIVE

▼ [2014](#) (5)

▼ [October](#) (1)

[My name is Chaplain Patrick and I'm terrible at bl...](#)

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writing. If you're anything like I was when I started, you'll invest 60+ hours on your first (and possibly only) wedding ceremony. 60+ hours! Are you planning to give more than a weeks salary as a wedding gift? Are you expected to officiate AND give a gift? Yikes!



Don't forget the wedding vendors!

The photographer, videographer, coordinator, DJ/musicians are all going to rely on your cues to make everything go as it should. Are you going to inform them that you're new to this or will you proceed confidently?

Public Speaking

How comfortable are you? If your heart starts pounding in your chest or if a frog decides to take refuge in your throat, there won't be anyone there to bail you out. Remember that you need to clearly say the words to the ceremony with the right tone and emotion, but you also need to guide it at the same time. Multitasking is absolutely required here.

Expect the Unexpected

I have had the unpleasant experience of throwing out a drunken best man who insisted on making obscene comments during the ceremony. What are you going to do if there is a medical emergency? What if the maid of honor passes out? Yes, these have all happened. Everyone will be looking at you for guidance. What will you do?

Cover your Assets

As in everything, there is liability. What if you're in an accident on the wedding day or a family member is very ill and you're needed elsewhere? You absolutely **MUST** have a back-up plan. Do you have a clearly written and signed contract that will protect you and your interests as well as her interests? A lawsuit is never good for a friendship.

Fork in the Road

It can go two ways: A) It will be a wonderful and relationship enhancing experience for you both. B) It will be a stressful experience that you never expected. There is very real potential that an error or problem on that day can seriously damage your friendship.

We know your friend wants you to officiate. The question remains, do you want to officiate?

Why Choose a Professional

If you know nothing about carpentry, your friend wouldn't ask you make her custom kitchen cabinets. This isn't any different. Some things are best left to the professionals who do this everyday.

What do you want?

I want you to very seriously think about what you want without worrying of what your friend wants. You are about to embark on a gamble of time and stress. Do you play your cards or fold and cheer from the sidelines?

Whatever you choose. I wish you the best,

Patrick

Posted by [Chaplain Patrick](#) at [12:36 PM](#) 1 comment:

SATURDAY, JANUARY 18, 2014

Let's Elope! Who needs Vegas?

Who needs Vegas?

themed costume.

You need Vegas! If you want Elvis to marry you. Sorry, we don't dress in



Our team has had the pleasure of marrying many couples who eloped right here in South Jersey.

To really understand the best options for you, we first need to know.... Hey! What is an elopement anyway?

elope (ɪˈləʊp) - vb (intr) to run away secretly with a lover, esp in order to

marry.



In more modern times, elopements are not always about secretly running off to get hitched. Elopements are also small weddings that are planned in very little time.

So you've found THE ONE. You've already said yes but you have not said "i do" yet.

Without question, eloping is exciting! It doesn't matter to us if it will be just a few guests or if you're throwing the big gala with all the fixings. It is all about one thing: getting married. Your wedding ceremony is the most important piece of your wedding day. The ceremony should be warm and fun, romantic and inspirational. It should set the tone for a great celebration.

It's up to you to decide how to celebrate your nuptials. Go out on the town, snuggle on the couch with a bowl of popcorn or throw a ball for all your friends. The important thing to remember is that there is no right or wrong answer. There is only your answer. After all, it's your day... so make it yours!



If you have questions, just ask! We love weddings and we are happy to help!

www.elopesouthjersey.com

Posted by Chaplain Patrick at [10:09 AM](#)

No comments:

MONDAY, JANUARY 13, 2014

Write a Review. Save a Life. Remember Louie.

If you're my friend on facebook ([click to find me](#)), you know that I recently posted about the loss of my good friend and partner in crime, Louie.

Louie's age when I adopted him from a shelter was really unknown. The vet's best guess was that he was three years old. So, with his recent passing, the best guess is that he lived to the ripe old doggy age of fourteen. *That's 82 in human years. I had to*



look it up.

These past few days have not been easy. I'm trying to stay busy and, as my grandmother would say, *keep on keepin' on*. I've also been thinking of ways to pay tribute to my good boy Louie. A shrub or flower will be planted in the spring in memory of him. I'm having a favorite photo blown up

and framed for my office wall. These things are only in *memory* of him. I want to pay *tribute* to a good dog.

A good dog who, through no choice of his own, found himself in a shelter at the age of three.

A thought was born: **Write a Review. Save a Life. Remember Louie.**

In paying tribute to a good boy: In 2014, I will donate \$5 for each and every review posted to [WeddingWire](#), [TheKnot](#) or [Google](#). The donations will be made in memory of Louie and will be sent to The Animal Orphanage of Voorhees, NJ. It doesn't matter if it was Rev. Yvonne, Rev. Chrissey or myself who was your officiant. I will personally make the donation in honor of Louie's memory.

It will probably take less than fifteen minutes of your time if you post to all three sites. That will make for a \$15 donation. That's enough to feed one hungry pup for almost a month!

If we officiated your wedding, will you consider posting a review now? When posting, we only request complete honesty. We would never tell or even hint at what you should post! Reviews are about your experience, so be honest.

Write a Review. Save a Life. Remember Louie.

PS- If you're local to Audubon or if we have a meeting scheduled; I accept donations of needed items, 365 days a year. Donations of dog food, cat food, bedding, toys, treats, gift cards, etc are always needed. I typically hold items until there is enough to fill the back seat of the car and then I make the trip to drop off the items. Every little bit helps. Click [here](#) for a list of much needed supplies.

Lou! This is for you. Good boy! Always a good boy. I love you bud.
-Daddy (Chaplain Patrick)

Posted by [Chaplain Patrick](#) at [9:16 PM](#) [1 comment:](#)

Resolution

2014 RESOLUTION.

Blog more. It's the 13th of January already and this is the first post. I know, I know. I hear you loud and clear.

This is a new year and a brand new blog. I've decided to retire my previous blog, "Chaplain Patrick & Associates". The name changed in 2012 to South Jersey Officiants and it's about time that the blog reflect the same thing too. If you would like to check out the old blog, feel free to take a look [here](#).

2013 IN REVIEW

2013 was a very big year for us. Yvonne, Chrissey and I have been busy busy busy helping wonderful couples have a shining moment that they will forever remember. We have so many wonderful people to thank for posting reviews on Wedding Wire, The Knot and Google. It's thanks to these wonderful reviews that we were recipients of The Couples' Choice Award 2014 on Wedding Wire. Again, thanks to their reviews, we also received the 2014 Pick - The Knot Best of Weddings. We are thrilled to receive the Wedding Wire award for the third year in a row. This is our first award with The Knot so we are super psyched to receive this recognition too.



The most humbling part is that these awards are not picked by the folks at Wedding Wire or The Knot. These are entirely based on real reviews, from real couples writing their real truths. The love that was shown through these reviews... it's just mind boggling (and super appreciated). Thank you!

WHAT'S AHEAD

The 2014 calendar is quickly filling up. There are lots of fresh ideas in the air. The excitement doesn't end. We're branching out to provide elopements in Philadelphia and in Atlantic City. We partnered with Tricia of [Lilac Blossom Photography](#) to provide elopement couples with FANTASTIC photography for their special day.

This is also the year that I get married! I'm extremely excited to marry my best friend on September 20, 2014. I'm also very proud to have my good friend and associate, Reverend Yvonne, to preside over our ceremony. It is going to be epic to say the least.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?

We have a fresh blog and a fresh look to the website. What would you like to see us blog about? Leave us a comment! We would love to hear from you!!

Until next time,

Patrick

Posted by [Chaplain Patrick](#) at [9:45 AM](#) [No comments:](#)

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Hiring a Wedding Officiant Q&A

Pridezillas

📅 June 22, 2015

We had more questions for James Engmann & his wife Connie on working with your officiant to plan your big day!

What possibilities are there for the wedding ceremony itself?

In Marriage Equality states, the possibilities vary greatly. If a same-sex couple is able to find a willing church and clergy member, the couple will be limited by the liturgy of that church. Some choices may be available, but that is probably about it.

If a couple has a family member or friend get ordained on the internet if they hire an independent officiant, the possibilities are only limited by the Officiant's knowledge of and ability to research wedding possibilities.

Obviously, professionally trained and experienced Officiants will have much more to offer the couple in terms of ideas and possibilities.

One thing to watch: there are legal requirements which need to be addressed by the officiant. In some states, the couple just needs to sign the marriage license to be married but in many states, the couple

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know as the "I Do's" – "Do you take this man or woman to be your husband or wife?" It doesn't need to

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be those words but the question or questions ask must show that each member of the couple is there willingly and is capable of making a legal decision. The second requirement is for the officiant to pronounce them married.

How does marriage ceremonies differ in states who do not recognize same-sex weddings?

First, it needs to be understood that these will not be legal marriages. A couple can use the term in its generic sense to describe the ceremony where they commit to each other. But whether it is called a wedding or commitment or union ceremony, the good news is that there is no requirement to have a licensed or state-recognized officiant. The couple is free to have anyone they choose 'officiate' the ceremony because there are no legal ramifications to the ceremony which require judicial officer or clergy qualifications.

The same concerns exist here with having an amateur officiate the ceremony. A wedding ceremony should be glorious, focused on the couple and their love and their love story, and amateur or hobby officiants are not well prepared to provide such a service. So LGBT couples will need to research and find an officiant who will perform the ceremony they truly want to have.

Where do most ceremonies take place?

Obviously churches and synagogues. After that, the possibilities are endless. Government and public buildings, such as capitols and museums, are very popular. Hotels are also very popular because the guests can check in, attend the ceremony, enjoy the reception and turn in for the night without having to drive anywhere. After that, gardens and parks are highly sought after places for ceremonies. Some couples like to be married at home or in their backyard. If the couple has a special place, they should check to see if their ceremony can be there!

How long does a typical ceremony last?

A wedding ceremony before a judicial officer can be this short, less than one minute. For some couples, that is all they want because their main concern is just being married.

For most couples, they want some ritual that connects them and their marriage to something bigger than themselves, which can be love or their families and circles of friends or, for those who believe, a Higher Power. Some church weddings can last one-and-a-half or two hours – the vast majority of couples do not want that. Most wedding officiate by family member and friends and other non-professional officiants last between five and fifteen minutes.

What couples, straight and gay, don't realize is that their wedding ceremony can be an event that touches their funny-bones and their hearts, as well as those of their guests. The couple should ask themselves: Do we want our ceremony to be memorable in a good way and to have our guests feel closer to us and to each other as a result of attending the ceremony? That takes a little time. My life and business partner Connie and I recommend that ceremonies fall in the 20 to 30 minute range, long enough that everyone realizes that the marriage has truly taken place but short enough that their attention do

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Will officiants typically have standard language for the couple's vows?

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Again, if married in a church, the liturgy may require certain wedding vows to be said. Other officiants may have restrictions on what vows can be exchanged by the couple. It adds a wonderful element if the couple writes or at least chooses their vows. The traditional vows have great history behind them – many in attendance were married by them – but they are also predictable. We encourage couples to find or write vows that truly reflect them and the marriage they are creating.

Do you have any other tips to give same-sex couples on planning their wedding ceremony?

I do. And much of this applies to all of the wedding vendors they may have: wedding coordinator, photographer, disk jockey, you get the idea. Interview candidates until you find someone you connect with on a personal basis, someone you like. The wedding can be a very stressful time and you want wedding vendors whom you feel you can approach as need be.

The wedding ‘industry’ gets a bad wrap for two big reasons: incompetence and pricing. I have met hundreds of professional wedding vendors, 99% of whom want to do a great job for the couple and want the couple to recommend them to their family and friends. Once in a great while, one of these pros will fall short of expectations, but this happens in all industries.

Most of the complains about incompetence comes from having vendors who do this as a hobby, something they do in addition to their regular job for the ego lift and extra money. Many people aspire to be a wedding professional and most of them do not last five years. So if the vendor you are interested in has been in business less than five years, make sure you check on any testimonials they provide for you. Of course the best testimonial is the vendor you have seen work at a wedding or one referred to you by a happy family member or friend.

The second knock of the wedding industry – expense – is connected to the first. If you are hiring a professional, you are going to pay more money than if you hire an amateur or a hobby vendor. In many cases, wedding professionals have an office and support staff, on-going continuing education in their field, professional organization fees and advertising and other expenses. Once the expenses have been paid, the pro needs to make a profit to live on. Think about it: If you hire someone who is doing this for fun and for some extra dollars, will they be as committed to providing excellence as someone who makes their living in this way and who depends on a good reputation and referrals from happy clients? The short answer is “No.”

Specifically, in terms of the Wedding Officiant, find someone with whom you feel safe. You need to know that she or he will handle the emotions in a loving way. We have Brides and Grooms who get weepy during their vows. I have heard officiants made a joke of it, especially if the weepy person is male. We hold that as a sacred event so we lovingly wait until the person is ready, providing a tissue if necessary, and then going forward. Find an officiant who will do the same.

About Happily Ever After Wedding Officiants:

Connie and James co-create with you and officiate for you a special, personal, unique and memorable Commitment Ceremony, one that will touch your hearts and funny-bones, as well as those of your guests. The l
feelings you
from living together to. . .living Happily Ever After!

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James and Connie's couples voted them Wisconsin Bride Magazine's 2011, 2012, and 2013 Best Wedding Officiants in the state – they are the only officiants to have ever won this most prestigious honor! Their couples also reviewed their work such that they won the Wedding Wire Bride's/Couple's Choice Award in 2012, 2013 and 2014, and the Knot Best of Wedding Officiants Pick in 2012 and 2014. In addition, the National Association of Wedding Professionals honored them with their Service Award in 2012 and 2013. Finally, Wisconsin Capitol Pride has chosen them to co-officiate their yearly Commitment Ceremony in 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014.

For more information or to contact Happily Ever After Wedding Officiants:
www.happilyeverafterweddings.info

To view their Pridezillas listing and why they support marriage equality: www.pridezillas.com/happily-ever-after-wedding-officiants

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